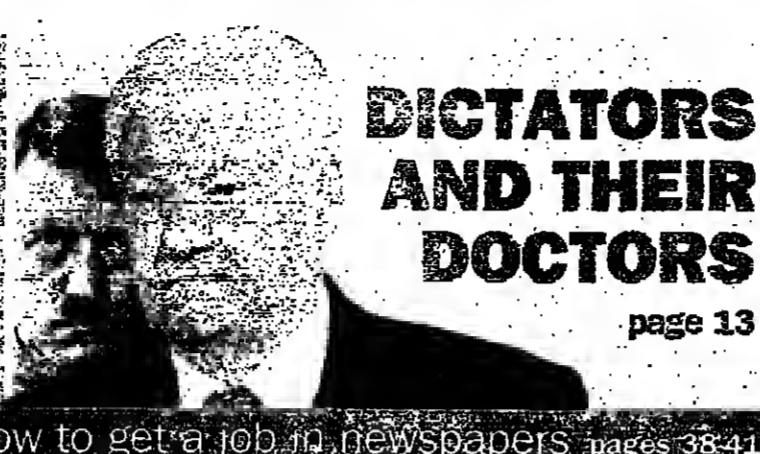




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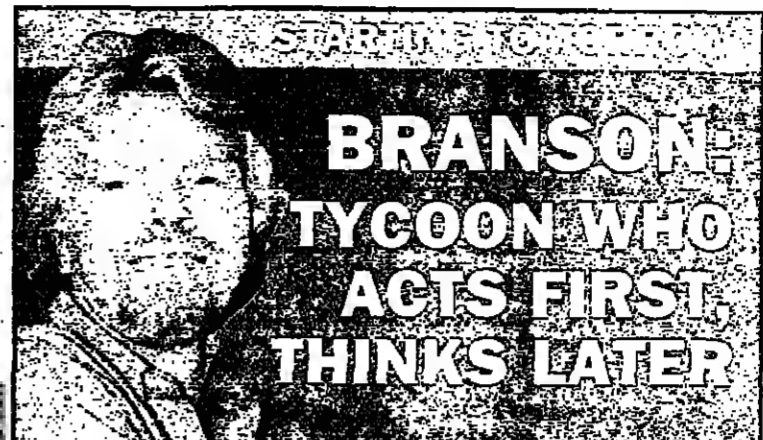
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Dictators AND THEIR DOCTORS

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BRANSON: TYCOON WHO ACTS FIRST, THINKS LATER

Walk the road of peace, pleads Clinton

By MARTIN FLETCHER, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

PRESIDENT CLINTON used his second extraordinary visit to Northern Ireland yesterday to celebrate the "magic" that has brought the Province to the cusp of peace after 30 years of conflict, and to implore its people to seize a chance that would never come again.

"It's your will for peace that has bought your country to this moment of hope. Don't let it slip away. It will not come again in our lifetimes," Mr Clinton said on a day of inspiring speeches and potent symbolism that gave another huge boost to those battling to banish the horrors of the past.

The emotional highlight came when the President and his wife visited Omagh, where they grieved with the wounded and bereaved, thanking them for "standing up in the face of such a soul-searching loss and restating your determination to walk the road of peace". They tearfully unveiled a plaque at the bombing site, and walked solemnly up Market Street to lay a wreath outside the Waterstones clothing shop which lost three assistants in the blast.

Mr Clinton visited Stormont, once the bastion of Unionist rule, to endorse a new Assembly where all but the most extreme will for the first time join to plot a com-

mon future. In brilliant sunshine he inaugurated the site of a cross-community college in West Belfast. He ended a day that had begun at 3am in Moscow at a huge open-air rally for peace and reconciliation in nearby Armagh.

It was a day that bolstered not only Northern Ireland but Mr Clinton's sagging political fortunes. After a dismal Moscow summit, and weeks of battering over the Monica Lewinsky affair, the pictures beamed back to America were of rousing receptions for the peacemaker president and a remarkable personal endorsement by Tony Blair.

"There is no President of the United States of America that has done more for peace in Northern Ireland than you," the Prime Minister declared as he introduced Mr Clinton to an audience of 2,000 dignitaries at Belfast's Waterfront Hall. "If this process ends where we want it to end, in lasting peace in Northern Ireland, then when the history of that peace is written your place within it is assured," he told a President once reviled in London for accommodating Sinn Fein.

The day capped a week of dramatic developments, including Gerry Adams's statement that all violence must end for good. Those words were "music to ears all across the world", Mr Clinton told Sinn Fein's president at the West Belfast ceremony.

Last night Martin McGuinness, Sinn Fein's chief negotiator, hinted at an even more radical development when asked if decommissioning could be achieved. If all political leaders played their part, "I think we can", he replied.

The day's toughest words Continued on page 2, col 5



Investigators on the dock at Peggy's Cove, Nova Scotia, sifting through the belongings of victims of Flight 111. The Swissair jet's flight recorder has not yet been found

229 die as jet crashes just minutes from safety

By RICHARD CLEWIX IN PEGGY'S COVE AND TUNIKU VARADARAJAN

RESCUERS gave up all hope last night of finding any survivors from the Swissair jet that crashed off Nova Scotia with 229 people aboard in the early hours of yesterday.

Urs Zimmermann, the pilot of Flight 111 from New York to Geneva, had reported smoke in the cockpit and dumped fuel ready for an emergency landing at Halifax airport, but he could not keep the crippled aircraft aloft and it plunged into the Atlantic off the fishing hamlet of Peggy's Cove.

Residents reported loud, spluttering noises as the jet went overhead — one described it as "the worst sounding deep groan that I have ever heard" — just before it hit the ocean with such force that houses shook. Fishermen put to sea and local emergency



Crash victims: Jonathan Mann, UN Aids expert, and the pilot Urs Zimmermann



services rushed to the coast, but the aircraft had broken into jigsaw-sized pieces on impact, and it took more than an hour to discover where it had gone down. Dozens of ships and boats searched in stormy weather through the night, but while a number of bodies were recovered — some

wearing lifejackets — no one was found alive.

The airline's officials gave the names of some of the victims to families who gathered in Switzerland, but said that the full list would not be released until all relatives had been informed, probably on Saturday. The UN, however,

announced that ten of its staff had been on board a flight nicknamed the "UN shuttle". They included the Aids expert Jonathan Mann and his wife Mary-Lou Clements-Mann; two members of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees' staff; two UN Children's Fund officials and two German copyright experts.

In total there were 215 passengers, including two infants, on the McDonnell Douglas MD11 and 14 crew. The dead included 137 Americans, six Britons — five men and a woman who all lived in America — 30 French, 28 Swiss, three Germans, three Italians and two Greeks.

Officials in Switzerland, Canada and America said last night that it was thought unlikely that the plane had been the target of a terrorist attack, but the cause of the crash will probably not be known until the flight record-

ers are recovered from the ocean. Jean-Claude Donzel of Swissair said that investigators were studying four possible reasons: technical problems, human failure, the weather and terrorism.

The flight had left New York at 8.18pm EDT (01.18am BST) and had taken off "normally" to reach its cruising altitude of 33,000ft, but 100 minutes into the flight, the pilot radioed that he was in difficulty.

M Donzel said that the crew had at first planned to fly back to Boston airport, where Swissair has an infrastructure. But they changed their minds and decided to head for Halifax, which was closer.

"The plane crashed about seven minutes before they would have got to Halifax," the pilot had radioed that he was in "serious difficulties", sending the message "Pan, Pan Pan" — an air version of the SOS signal based on the

French and German word *panne* for breakdown.

Authorities believe that the terrific speed and sharp angle at which the aircraft hit the water eliminated any chance of anyone surviving. Had it landed at a narrower angle, it might have planed on the water and perhaps remained afloat for up to 20 minutes, as many modern jetliners are designed to do. As it was, would-be rescuers who arrived within minutes found only bits of debris.

Whatever is left of the aircraft is thought to be under 120ft of water, close enough to the surface to show up on underwater radar screens and thus be retrievable by divers. Last night, however, there was no indication of how much of the aircraft was intact or how many passengers may still be strapped into their seats.

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Many hands make heavy work of plughole drama

By SIMON DE BRUXELLES



Claudie: free at last

THEY were only tiny fingers, but it took 21 pairs of hands to free 16-month-old Claudie Francis when she decided to stick them down the plughole.

The two-hour operation required the assistance of 14 firemen, two paramedics, a doctor, a paediatrician, an anaesthetist, a nurse and an aeronautical engineer.

The trouble started when Claudie removed the plug in her bath while her mother, Linzi, turned to get a towel from the airing cupboard. Fascinated by the swirling water, she tried to find out where it was going. By the time Mrs Francis had

turned round, all four fingers of Claudie's right hand had become firmly wedged in the plughole.

Trying not to panic, she used soap and shampoo to lubricate the fingers but they began to swell. After 20 minutes she was forced to concede defeat and dialled 999. A few minutes later she was joined in the bathroom of her home in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, by seven firemen and two paramedics. They, too, failed to free Claudie and decided to dismantle the bath.

Confident the emergency was safely in hand, the fire crew left and Claudie was taken to Cheltenham General Hospital.

still attached to the plughole. However, after a doctor, a nurse and an anaesthetist had given up the struggle, the fire brigade was called in again. It was then decided the only solution was to scramble Kelvin Tustin, an aircraft engineer, from a nearby aerospace factory with specialist cutting gear.

As Mr Tustin was on his way to the hospital, the firefighters finally managed to cut off the plughole.

Mrs Francis said: "I can't believe someone so little could cause so much trouble." Unfortunately, she said, Claudie still had her eye on the plughole, despite what had happened.



Streaming for five-year-olds

Five-year-old children should be streamed according to their performance in the "baseline" tests that they take within weeks of starting school, the Schools Minister Charles Clarke said.

Mr Clarke also urged parents not to coach their children for the assessments, which are being introduced this term to help teachers to find out the new pupil's weaknesses and organise tuition accordingly. Page 6

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Terrorist Bill is dangerous, say sceptical Lords

Nicholas Watt on peers' concerns at rushed legislation

A SENIOR Law Lord yesterday criticised the Government's anti-terrorist legislation as a "dangerous mouse" that would fail to secure any convictions.

Speaking during the Second Reading of the Criminal Justice (Terrorism and Conspiracy) Bill, Lord Lloyd of Berwick said he had grave doubts about attempting to convict terrorists on the word of a senior police officer.

The Bill is designed to toughen anti-terrorist measures by making it easier for courts to convict suspected terrorists of membership of one of four groups opposed to the Northern Ireland peace process. The opinion of a senior police officer that a suspect was a terrorist would be admissible as evidence and courts would be able to draw inference from the refusal of suspects to answer questions.

Lord Lloyd, who carried out a review of Britain's anti-terrorist legislation last year, said police officers normally gave only evidence of fact in court, not opinion. He said: "This is a very odd provision. It is not for a policeman to express an opinion."

Lord Lloyd said he could not see how the measure would work. "A police officer's opinion is only worth what his sources will supply. If he says this is an opinion, that is worth nothing in a court of law. It is only worth something if he can support it. But that is exactly what he cannot do. His opinion is based on evidence that he cannot discuss because it comes from informers and sources."

Lord Lloyd also voiced doubt about the proposal concerning suspects remaining silent, which he said was an infringement that made the Bill a "dangerous mouse". Suspects would simply deny that they were members of one of the banned organisations opposed to the peace process, such as the Real IRA.

The Law Lord said that the only way to secure convictions in such cases would be to

admit evidence from intercepted telephone calls, something the Government has rejected. He told peers: "It is awful to think that during all these years people might have been convicted as a result of introducing intercept evidence."

Lord Lloyd said he would vote for the Bill because of the symbolic importance of responding to the Omagh bombing and acting in tandem with the Irish Government. "It may be that it is nothing more than a gesture. But there are times when gestures are necessary and this is such an occasion."

His criticisms were echoed by Lord Mayhew of Twyden, the former Northern Ireland Secretary and Attorney-General, who said he had rejected such measures when he was in government. Lord Mayhew said that it was dangerous to rely so strongly on the evi-

dence of a senior police officer.

He said: "I don't think the judges in Northern Ireland ought to be put in this position, because I think it is a dangerous position for them and it comes close to inviting them to approach the issue of guilt or innocence in a way which is not wholly a judicial way. They will be required to decide judicially on the basis of a senior police officer's opinion the issue of guilt or innocence, when often they will not have had, in cross-examination, the basis for that opinion spelt out."

Lord Mayhew said that the measures could create an injustice. "People ought not to be convicted on the hearsay evidence, backed by straws in the wind."

He also challenged the measures in the Bill that are designed to crack down on terrorists, mainly from the Middle East, who use Britain as a base to plot attacks abroad. A conspiracy to commit a terrorist crime abroad could be tried in Britain.

Peers from all parties echoed MPs' criticisms of the Government for rushing through the legislation. Viscount Cranborne, the Tory leader in the Lords, said he would support the Bill, but he criticised the "extraordinarily hurried and unprepared way" it had been introduced.

Lord Williams of Mostyn, the Home Office Minister, said the Bill had been created in response to the murders in Omagh and to the "clear and present danger" of terrorism. Opening the Second Reading debate, he said: "We could have introduced some of the measures contained in this Bill by Order. We thought that was to behave in a wrong way. We had to judge the appropriate course in difficult circumstances and I believe we have done the right thing to recall Parliament so that primary legislation can be passed."

Peers were later moving on to detailed Committee stage consideration of the Bill before it returned to the Commons.



Lord Lloyd: doubts over police "opinion"



Lord Mayhew: Bill could create injustice



Sinn Fein's chief negotiator Martin McGuinness, left, and the party's president, Gerry Adams, meeting President Clinton in Belfast yesterday

IRA tells rebels to disband or else

THE IRA has given the self-styled Real IRA two weeks to disband or face "action" against its members, it was reported yesterday.

Senior Provisionals visited the homes of around 60 members of the Real IRA and its political counterparts in the 32-County Sovereignty Committee on Tuesday evening. Two unmasked men went to each house and read out a statement from the IRA's army council, the *Irish Times* said.

"The two men who called to my door said the Real IRA had no right to exist and accused it of misappropriating weapons," said one of those who were allegedly threatened.

Group that bombed Omagh has been given two-week deadline, reports Martin Fletcher

Earlier on Tuesday, Gerry Adams had issued a statement all but declaring that the war was over, and demanding those still engaged in violence stop. On Sunday night, the IRA had issued a statement denouncing the Real IRA and demanding it disband.

Republican sources say there is deep and widespread anger within the movement at the damage the Real IRA did to their cause with the Omagh

bomb. The Real IRA has announced a temporary cessation of its "military operations", but it believed to be divided over whether to call a ceasefire.

The IRA may, in fact, be spared the need to breach its own ceasefire by dealing violently with the Real IRA. Draconian new anti-terrorist legislation should have completed its passage through both the British and Irish Parliaments by today, and there

is speculation that the Irish police in particular will use it almost immediately to round up the splinter group's ringleaders.

Peter King, a US Congressman travelling with President Clinton, has meanwhile confirmed that the US Justice Department is preparing to crack down on those raising money for the dissidents in America. **C** Jean McBride, mother of the murdered teenager Peter McBride, met President Clinton yesterday and handed him a letter expressing her frustration and anger that the two Scots Guards responsible for his death had not been discharged by the Army.

Peace girl sees dream of future take shape

BY PETER FOSTER

A YOUNG girl who wrote to Tony Blair urging him not to give up on the Northern Ireland peace process saw the first tangible fruits of her labours yesterday.

Margaret Gibney, 13, from the Protestant Shankill Road, has spent the past 14 months highlighting the need for cross-community understanding in one of the poorest and most divided areas of the city.

Yesterday, watched by President Clinton and Mr Blair, she turned the first sod of a £70 million higher education centre to be built on the dividing line of Catholic and Protestant West Belfast. It is hoped the project, backed by the Government and American money, will offer new opportunities to a working class area where unemployment can reach 80 per cent.

As a symbol of the new spirit of co-operation which the Springvale Educational Village hopes to engender Miss Gibney was joined by a 15-year-old Catholic boy, Gerard Quinn.

Miss Gibney has previously met Mr Blair in Downing Street and Mrs Clinton in Belfast last year. She has also been appointed by the United Nations as an ambassador for peace.

Mowlam casts off the wig and heads back to her natural look

BY NICHOLAS WATT, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

MO MOWLAM has at last cast off the wig and scarf which she has worn since losing her hair after undergoing radiotherapy for a benign tumour 18 months ago.

The Northern Ireland Secretary's short blond hair was on display yesterday as she escorted President Clinton during his visit to the Province. She had first discarded her bandeau in Belfast last Friday for a public engagement and did not wear it in the Commons this Wednesday.

Dr Mowlam's wig had almost become part of political folklore and her candour about her condition became the stuff of anecdote and was

admired on all sides. On one celebrated occasion Dr Mowlam was so irritated by her wig that she removed it during a press briefing for American journalists with the words: "I am going to take my hair off. I don't care about you lot. I'm in a mood."

She said that she had never got used to the wig because when she gestulated it moved. "My real problem is holding onto my wig getting in and out of helicopters."

When her hair started to grow back, the Northern Ireland Secretary replaced the wig with a blue and purple scarf. She had to avoid choosing either orange or green

scarves to avoid giving offence to either the nationalist or Unionist community as she went about her job.

In recent months she started to remove the scarf at home and at work, but waited until this week before removing it in public. When the tumour was diagnosed, Dr Mowlam, then Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, told only a few friends. She coped until stories appeared in the tabloids about her increase in weight which they linked to her decision to give up cigarettes.

Dr Mowlam then made public the fact that she was wearing a wig and had been on a course of steroids.



Dr Mowlam yesterday; in the wig she had to wear; and before treatment caused hair loss

Seize last chance, pleads Clinton

Continued from page 1

came from David Trimble, Northern Ireland's First Minister. With Mr Clinton sitting behind him he stared down at Mr Adams and Mr McGuinness in the front row and demanded IRA disarmament. "If the so-called war is over I can see no justification for holding on to illegal weapons," he said. "I cannot reconcile seeking positions in Government with a failure to discharge responsibilities under the agreement to dismantle terrorist organisations."

However, Mr Trimble also pledged to work with any genuine democrat and promised "a pluralist parliament for a pluralist people" — a striking inversion of the "Protestant state for a Protestant people" trumpeted by Lord Craigavon, Northern Ireland's first Prime Minister. Mr Clinton extolled Northern Ireland's

journey "from the deep freeze of despair to the warm sunlight of peace", but carefully avoided the euphoria of his 1995 visit that was punctured by the IRA's Docklands bomb two months later.

He gave warning that Omagh was not the last bomb of the Troubles but "the opening shot of a vicious attack on the peace". He also urged people not to let "the bad habits and brute forces of yesterday break your will for tomorrow's peace". They had to support their leaders, show that the centre could hold, and "prove that the passion for reason and moderation can trump the power of extremes", he said.

Their leaders had to nurture the best in their people by showing the best in themselves. They had to "act in concert not conflict, overcome obstacles not create them, rise above petty disputes not fuel

them... The spirit of reconciliation must be rooted in all you do".

Mr Clinton demanded the decommissioning of "obsolete" weapons and an end to all paramilitary violence, but balanced that with calls for the formation of an executive, police reform and prisoner releases. He praised Mr Adams and Mr Trimble for their courageous moves towards implementing the Good Friday peace accord this week.

Unlike John Major in 1995, Mr Blair accompanied Mr Clinton throughout the day. Without naming Mr Trimble, who faces a Unionist backlash if he proceeds with a meeting with Mr Adams next week, the Prime Minister called for "the courage to move ahead, to take risks, to be prepared even when close supporters criticise, to have the imagination that is the hallmark of true leadership".

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سكزا من الأصيل

Magic touch brings hope to Omagh

The President's confidence that he can always be effective was not misplaced, reports Valerie Grove

NEVER doubt that a President can wreak a transforming magic. The town of Omagh, so recently devastated, became like a holiday centre yesterday.

From a clear sky, the sun shone with a fierce brilliance. The last time they had seen such sun, people said, was three Saturdays ago when the bomb exploded. Yesterday that happening was hard to believe, given the tangible air of optimism and hope.

As a dozen United States Air Force helicopters roared overhead, people were still arriving from miles around to get a peep at the President. They queued obediently to have their bags searched with grim thoroughness by American secret servicemen in threatening black glasses. The scene in Market Street was tranquil — every shop was closed for the day — but even though we could see the boarded up and ruined buildings, the mood was not sombre.

Everyone in the crowd knew someone who had died or been injured, but those most closely bereaved were gathered in the leisure centre, the very building that had become an incident centre on the day of the bomb.

Inside the leisure centre the Blairs and the Clintons were "deeply moved" to meet several hundred relatives of the dead. Mr Clinton's confrontation with the bomb victims was significantly kept private, out of sight of the world's media.

The first person they greeted was a girl with both eyes bandaged, then a boy in a Leeds United shirt with both hands bandaged. The mood inside was sombre to begin with but it lightened as they spoke to more people, who told the leaders to keep going with the peace process. Mr Blair found it "harrowing and inspirational".

There had been some hesitancy among the organisers of the Clinton visit about whether a stop at Omagh would be "appropriate". The President himself decided: "I have to go.

It's what people will expect of me." Perhaps it is his confidence that whatever happens, he can always lend an effective presence. And his confidence was not misplaced yesterday. The people of Omagh — a warm and welcoming community, as they tell you with unaffected pride — were gratified and comforted.

Sean Loughran, a barman who was working a few yards away from the exploding bomb, unequivocally thought it was "magical" that Clinton had come. "After all the commotion and the hurt, the terrible hurt, people here need help. And this is our last hope, there's no doubt about it."

After all the commotion and the hurt, people here need help. And this is our last hope, no doubt.

Everyone had a tale to tell. Karenna McFall, a mother of three who lives just round the corner from Market Street, was gardening when the bomb went off. Her first thought was that her mother, Evelyn Gregg, and her daughter Clara,

were shopping in Market Street. She and her husband leapt into their Jeep. Failing to find them, they went to the hospital. "I can't describe to you what the fear felt like. I couldn't speak at all for 40 minutes. But we had a happy outcome. I can't stop thinking of all the people we know who lost their families. God's guidance guided us that day," Mrs McFall said.

Aimee Day said: "My neighbour had just got back from holiday. Her husband and son went out to get a few groceries, and she lost them both. Now she says she wishes she'd gone with them."

These women's welcome for the President was quite untinged by any suspicion that he might be milking the situation for his own benefit. "Not at all," said Mrs McFall. "We welcome him because of his involvement with the peace agreement. After all, he was in Belfast a couple of years ago and he promised there would be no more violence. The success of the peace initiative is very much down to Mr Clinton and that is not forgotten by us. So we are pleased that he has not forgotten us and has come to Omagh."



President Clinton and his wife Hillary see some of the shops in Omagh damaged in the August 15 explosion

They especially appreciated the way Mr Clinton had emphasised Gerry Adams's non-violent pledge by repeating it meaningfully in the presence of the entire assembly that morning in Belfast.

When President Clinton arrived in Omagh the local chamber of commerce handed him a long and impassioned letter. "Our minds are not on commerce and trade today, but on those we have lost. But we cannot stand still. We are people of good faith. This is a good country but we are not ashamed to ask for help... So please tell your business leaders of our attractions here."

The people of Northern Ireland are plainly grateful to have the world's eyes focused on them and with staggering resilience they are all trying to see this presidential visit as a final seal on the Troubles. Everyone asks: "Don't you agree this is a beautiful country? Tell people how green it is. Tell them how peaceful it is."

And it is. On the road from Belfast to Omagh there is a greenness to the well tended countryside and, despite everything, a benign air of peace. After the President had unveiled a plaque and laid a wreath at the site of the bomb, he and Hillary Clinton and the Blairs moved through surging crowds who jostled to clutch their hands. Who would have thought that these scenes of warmth could have been possible in this stricken town?

CARLOS LOPEZ/AP

How President forced the pace of change

By Martin Fletcher, Chief Ireland Correspondent

BILL CLINTON may be a lame-duck President at home, but he can still get things done in Northern Ireland.

As he arrived at Belfast's Aldergrove airport yesterday he was handed evidence of how his visit had already injected momentum into the peace process — a newspaper predicting a first face-to-face meeting next week between David Trimble and Gerry Adams, the leaders of Unionism and republicanism.

That meeting would be only the latest of a dizzying sequence of developments over recent days in a province where progress used to be so glacial. On Sunday the IRA, assured that its first prisoners would be released next week, pledged to locate the graves of the "disappeared" — those it spirited away and killed.

On Tuesday, Mr Adams issued his long-awaited statement declaring not quite that the war was over, but that the violence of the past 30 years must be "a thing of the past — over, done with and gone". His words were exactly those that Tony Blair had used a few months earlier.

Wednesday saw another advance: Sinn Fein's appointment of Martin McGuinness as its representative to the international disarmament commission.

These advances were not entirely due to American intervention. The Omagh bomb reinforced the peace-makers' determination to advance the political alternative to such violence.

Nor were the Americans the only players in the intense behind-the-scenes efforts to surmount the disarmament issue so Sinn Fein could join Northern Ireland's new government. Sources said one crucial factor was the increasingly strong rapport between Mr Blair and Mr Adams. Dublin also played its part.

But it was the President's looming visit that forced the pace. American debts that were called in, and America's assurances that may ultimately have persuaded Sinn Fein at least to take the steps it has.

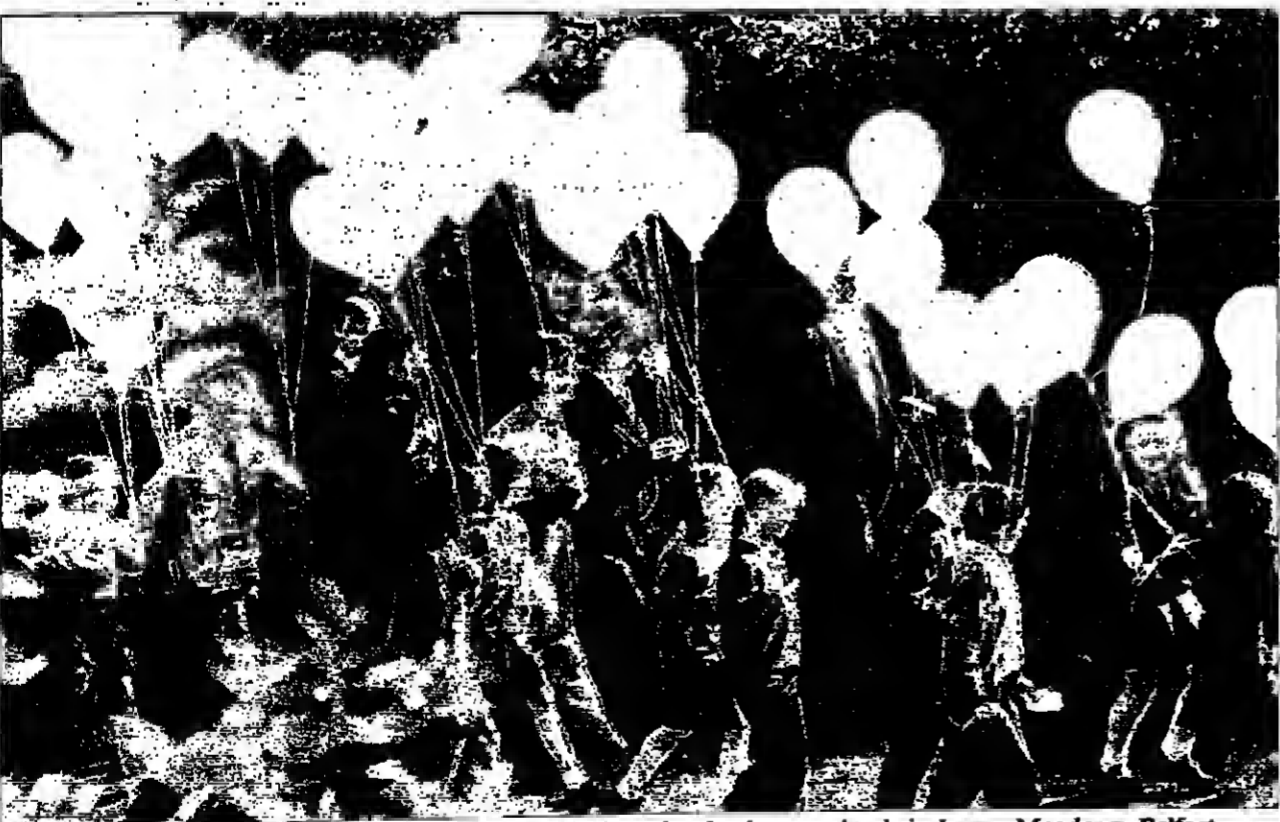
The problem that has dogged the peace process is the total lack of trust between the Unionists and Sinn Fein or, as Senator George Mitchell, the man who chaired the peace talks, put it, the actual "presumption of bad faith".

In the run-up to the President's visit, the Americans, British and Irish shuttled between the two sides, exploring whether the Unionists would do this if Sinn Fein did that, and vice-versa. They thus constructed the choreographed sequence of events that is still unfolding.

Despite the fine words it remains unclear whether that sequence will secure Sinn Fein's place in the executive later this year. Mr Trimble used his speech before President Clinton at the Waterfront Hall yesterday to welcome recent developments but also to emphasise that he still expects actual decommissioning.



Trimble: may meet Adams next week



Cherie Blair and Hillary Clinton with children from local primary schools in Lagan Meadows, Belfast

First ladies charm the young with enthusiastic double act

IT WAS a huggy, feely sort of morning in Belfast when Hillary Clinton and Cherie Blair performed a double act in the city's most charming area of common land, the steeply undulating Lagan Meadows, to lend their voices to a campaign for safe play areas for Northern Ireland's children.

Here the two first ladies, in their contrasting trouser suits — the brunette in grey, the blonde in black — did what they are both good at: endearing mothers and children. Whenever the two meet, Cherie told the small gathering, she and Hillary invariably talk about children.

In their smart uniforms, children from two local schools — the Protestant Stramillis Primary School and the Catholic St Bride's — launched hundreds of balloons and clustered round

Valerie Grove sees the leaders' wives in winning form as they join a campaign for safe play areas

Hillary and Cherie for autographs. When an officious aide said there was no time, Hillary shooed him aside. "Sure we have time," she said, and proceeded to sign as she walked up the hill, pausing to hug nine-year-old John Donaghy on the way.

Despite the cordon of secret service men in the suburban roads near by, Mary Bleasie, a Belfast psychologist, just happened to be out walking in Lagan Meadows and was astonished to find herself asked the way to the loo by Cherie Blair.

There were bear hugs from both women for Antoinette

McKeown, chief executive of the pressure group PlayBoard, who was moved to tears by the first ladies' display of enthusiasm for her cause. With the aid of Hillary's similar initiative named "KABOOM! PlayBoard is trying to have the Lagan Meadows designated an environmental play area which will be designed and organised by the children themselves."

"We have provided no role models for our children in the last 30 years except shooting and killing," Ms McKeown said. "They have lost their traditions of play-

ing in our concrete cities. Children are the most adversely affected victims of the Troubles. They represent our future and play has a crucial role in the healing process."

While the VIPs of Belfast and visiting dignitaries were gathering to hear President Clinton's address, the mothers of Belfast saw far more significance in seeing Hillary and Cherie supporting them and their children in whose hands the reality of the future lies. As Hillary constantly reminded her audience, it is women who pushed forward the peace process, women whose lives have been blighted by the prospect of burying their children.

"And as my good friend Madeline Albright says, advancing the cause of women is not just the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do for any society."

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MARTIN CLUNES'S PHOTO DIARIES

GPs urged to reduce reliance on antibiotics

Overprescription is behind rise in 'superbugs', says Alexandra Freen

PEOPLE suffering from colds, coughs or sore throats should no longer be able to obtain antibiotic treatments on demand from their GPs, government advisers said yesterday.

The recommendation, in a report by the Standing Medical Advisory Committee, is part of an attempt to suppress the emergence of "superbugs" — bacteria immune to antibiotics — that threaten eventually to make diseases such as meningitis and tuberculosis untreatable.

Many GPs and patients have come to regard antibiotics as "quick fixes" for virtually any infection, even those caused by viruses, which are not susceptible to them. An estimated 50 million prescriptions for antibiotics are dispensed in England each year, of which up to 18 million may be ineffective.

The committee also recommends that the prescribing of antibiotics for cystitis be limited to three days and that telephone prescriptions for the drugs be severely curtailed.

Diana Walford, one of the report's authors, said that the overprescription of antibiotics was threatening doctors' ability to treat serious illnesses as bacteria and antimicrobial agents became resistant to them. "The more we use them, the more we lose them."

Dr Walford, who chairs the committee's sub-group on antimicrobial resistance, said that even though antibiotics were routinely prescribed for colds and sore throats, there was often no benefit to patients since most such conditions were caused by viruses, which they do not cure.

Fifty per cent of antibiotic prescriptions in the community are for respiratory tract infections. Two thirds to three quarters of these infections are caused by viruses," she said.

The report recommends new prescribing guidelines for



Tessa Jowell, the Public Health Minister, speaking at a press conference at the Department of Health yesterday

GPs' surgeries and hospitals. It also calls for a public education campaign to teach people to "cherish and conserve their normal bacterial flora" and to educate them about when antibiotics are really needed. It says infection control in hospitals and medical practices needs to be tightened and calls for a national strategy for resistance surveillance, to track the emergence of new "superbugs".

Judith Gilley, joint deputy chair of the British Medical

Association's GP committee, said that GPs and community practitioners, who prescribe 80 per cent of antibiotics, were under enormous pressure from patients, particularly from students before exams, to prescribe the drugs. While antibiotics were still necessary for the treatment of some conditions, such as urinary tract infections in children and pelvic infections in women, GPs needed to be firmer in their resolve only to prescribe them appropriately, she said.

Sir Kenneth Calman, the

Chief Medical Officer, added that parents should not hesitate to take their children to the doctor in situations where immediate antibiotic treatment might be life-saving. Where antibiotics were prescribed, people should not be deterred from taking the full course.

Both the British Medical Association and the Royal College of General Practitioners said they supported the recommendations, which are to be sent to all doctors.

The report follows the publi-

cation in April of a warning from the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee that the world was in danger of slipping back to the pre-antibiotic era of untreatable disease unless urgent action was taken to reduce the overuse and misuse of antibiotics.

Tessa Jowell, the Minister for Public Health, said that it was a worldwide problem that needed to be tackled on the international stage by organisations such as the European Union.

Drink and drugs are part of life for young doctors

By IAN MURRAY
MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

MOST junior hospital doctors drink too much alcohol and many use cannabis or other drugs, according to a report. Stress, anxiety and mental ill-health are also common.

A survey among house officers a year after qualification found that about 60 per cent drank above the recommended weekly limits — 21 units for men and 14 units for women. Average consumption had increased in every case since the same people were surveyed as second-year students four or five years earlier.

The report in *The Lancet* today says that 11 per cent of the men and 12 per cent of the women drink a "hazardous" level — at least two and a half times above that recommended. About a quarter indulge in binge drinking, consuming at least half a safe weekly amount in one session, with the women slightly more prone to do this than the men.

More than 35 per cent of the men and 19 per cent of the women were using cannabis, more than 11 per cent regularly. A further 13 per cent of the men and 10 per cent of the women were using magic mushrooms, LSD, Ecstasy, cocaine or amphetamines.

The vast majority of the 90 newly qualified doctors at 18 hospitals in the North East of England said they drank or took drugs for pleasure. They had been surveyed during the second year of training and pressure of work did not appear to be a factor.

Another questionnaire on general health found that 45 per cent of the women and 21 per cent of the men were showing so much stress that they were possibly suffering from pathological anxiety.

However, the researchers, from the Wolfson Unit of Clinical Pharmacology at the University of Newcastle, say high scores for anxiety and mental health were related to work pressures and unrelated to the use of alcohol or illicit drugs. "The current drinking habits, illicit drug use, and stress in some junior doctors is of concern, not only for their well-being, but also how they may affect patient care."

A recent survey by the British Medical Association estimated that more than 9,000 doctors in Britain — approximately one in 15 — needed help for addiction. The Academy of Royal Colleges recommended that NHS managers should have the right to impose random testing for drink and drugs.

Andrew Hobart, deputy chairman of the BMA's junior doctors committee, said research showed that long periods without sleep were even more harmful to performance than drinking moderate amounts of alcohol.

Radiation dose 'can be focused on cancer'

By IAN MURRAY
MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

A HIGHLY accurate radiotherapy treatment for prostate cancer can eradicate the disease in up to nine out of ten cases, a specialist said yesterday. Trials are now under way to find out if the new method will improve the long-term survival rates for the 15,000 men who are diagnosed with the disease each year.

David Dearnaley, of the Institute of Cancer Research, has been leading the development of the new technique, known as conformal radiotherapy. He told a conference at the Royal Society of Medicine in London that it involved building a three-dimensional picture of the diseased part of the prostate gland with the help of scanning and imaging.

"It is then possible to shape the dose of radiotherapy precisely around the target area, without radiating the normal tissues," he said. "This means we can reduce serious side-effects like rectal bleeding that limit the dose you can give."

The British Medical Association estimated that more than 9,000 doctors in Britain — approximately one in 15 — needed help for addiction. The Academy of Royal Colleges recommended that NHS managers should have the right to impose random testing for drink and drugs.

Andrew Hobart, deputy chairman of the BMA's junior doctors committee, said research showed that long periods without sleep were even more harmful to performance than drinking moderate amounts of alcohol.

Court-martial cases head for Euro court

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

THIRTY-SIX new challenges to the legality of the court martial system are being brought before European human rights judges in Strasbourg.

The cases follow two rulings last year that court martial procedures in the Armed Forces are a breach of the European Convention on Human Rights. Now 36 men and women serving or formerly serving in the Forces are hoping that similar findings will include substantial compensation awards against the Ministry of Defence.

The Government says it will not contest new rulings that there have been human rights violations, but wants a decision on what compensation "if any" should go to the applicants.

The Government's hope is that the judges will deliver the same verdict as before: that they cannot compensate for lost income because the applicants might have been court-martialled even if procedures had been carried out in line with the European convention.

A test case by Alex Findlay, a Falklands veteran, last year paved the way for the latest legal actions. He successfully claimed that his army court-martial procedures breached the con-

vention, which guarantees the right to a fair trial before an "independent and impartial tribunal".

Months later a similar claim made by Paul Coyne, an RAF non-commissioned officer, also led to a unanimous ruling that a court martial convened under the 1955 Army Act "did not meet the requirements of independence and impartiality set by the convention".

Both men's human rights claims were based on differences between courts martial and civilian criminal court procedures. Servicemen and women facing trial within the Forces cannot elect trial by jury and the appeals procedure is less comprehensive.

But the key difference was the role of the "convening officer", who sets up the court when a case is heard and appoints its members from among his own subordinate officers serving in units under his command.

Since the cases were brought, the Ministry of Defence has introduced reforms to the system. It has abolished the role of the convening officer, although the courts martial system is still accused of providing fewer safeguards for defendants than in civilian criminal courts.

Goal thief

Goal thief

Pantomime prepare to courtroom

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سكنا من الأهل

Goalkeeper holds on to thief after 15-mile chase

Player gave police cars a running commentary, writes Adam Fresco

THE Premiership goalkeeper Kevin Pressman chased and caught a car thief who stole his £30,000 Mercedes after a 15-mile dawn chase along country roads yesterday.

The Sheffield Wednesday player was woken by the noise of his vehicle being driven from his home at 6.15am and immediately sprang into action. He jumped out of bed, pulled on some clothes, rang the police and then sped after the thief in his wife's car, grabbing his mobile phone as he went.

After five minutes' driving along country roads near his home in Chesterfield, he spotted his S320 Mercedes speeding towards him. He spun round and attempted to follow the car, which was travelling at speeds of up to 90mph, all the time giving police a running commentary on his phone of where the thief was heading. Six police cars

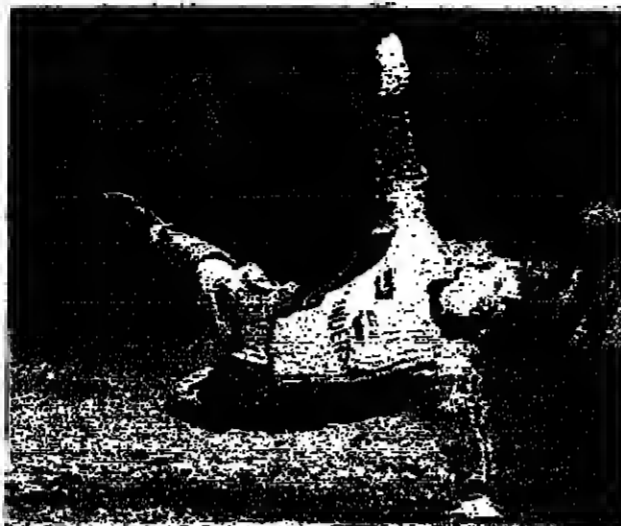
were sent to join the chase, but the officers felt it was not safe to travel at such high speeds and lost the thief.

Pressman, 31, also lost sight of his car and had given up hope of seeing it again when he noticed it sitting in the middle of the road and rang police again to give them the location.

He said: "I thought the thief had abandoned the car and went up to the driver's side. I thought he had run off but he was still in the car, trying to steal the radio. When he saw me he shot off."

Pressman, who is married with three children, sprinted back to his car and the chase began again. At 6.26am Pressman made another call to the police and told them his car was being driven at about 90mph out of Chesterfield towards Baslow.

After a few minutes one of the police cars joined the chase



Pressman at full stretch for Sheffield Wednesday

and the goalkeeper, who was named in an England squad in the run-up to the World Cup, decided to leave the pursuit to them, but they lost the vehicle when it increased speed.

As Pressman drove home, he saw his car lying in a ditch

after being involved in an accident with an Audi. At 6.45am he checked that the innocent driver was all right while the thief was still in his Mercedes.

The thief spotted the goalkeeper and ran off across the fields in the Derbyshire coun-

tryside off the A619 near to Baslow, Derbyshire.

Undeterred, Pressman — not the league's most svelte performer — gave chase for a mile and a half across the field before grabbing him and holding him until the police arrived half an hour after he began the chase.

A spokesman for Derbyshire police praised the Pressman. "Kevin is to be highly commended for his actions. He kept us fully informed of what was happening as the incident progressed. This is obviously a case of the goalkeeper who wouldn't let anything past him."

Pressman said: "I was woken up by the sound of the car driving away. The car appeared to be spluttering up the road. I don't know why. It may have been the immobiliser. I rang the police straight away.

"It was a spur of the moment thing. I didn't think. My wife was worried about me but I would be more bothered if she wasn't."

A 23-year-old man was helping police with their inquiries.



Kevin Pressman back at home yesterday with the mobile phone he used in the chase

Pantomime rivals prepare to stage courtroom drama

By SIMON DE BRUXELLES

RIVAL troupes of amateur actors are threatening to take legal action after accusations that each has stolen the other's name.

The farce began when leading members of the Phoenix Revue Company decided to move to a bigger venue after 46 years at the Barn Theatre, run by Cirencester Community Association. They say they have the right to take the company's name with them, but the rival faction says: "Oh no you don't!"

Unless the dispute is settled, the Gloucestershire town will enjoy two pantomimes in the New Year, both performed simultaneously by groups claiming to be the authentic Phoenix Revue Company.

The defectors have booked the 400-seat Corn Hall where rehearsals for *Dick Whittington* are under way. Back at the 130-seat Barn Theatre, another group of players are preparing *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

The community association maintains that the Phoenix name can be used only by members who stage plays in their hall. But Gloria Mannion, chairman of the breakaway group, said: "That's absolutely stupid. All

the members of the company who were in last year's panto have left the association."

Mrs Mannion has instructed solicitors to prevent the community association from continuing to use the Phoenix name.

Andrew Brown, chairman of the association, claims the loyalty of 24 Phoenix stalwarts. He said: "The Revue Company is still here. If the breakaway group want to take legal action over the name that's up to them, but we're not giving it up without a fight."

CORRECTIONS

Samuelson Productions have asked us to make clear that their film about Winston Churchill during the early part of the Second World War (*Diary, July 27*) will be a balanced political and domestic portrait of the man and *The Finest Hour*.

Henri Brandman is the solicitor who acted for the former boxer Terry Marsh, who was cleared of attempted murder, and not Henry Milner, as reported on Wednesday.

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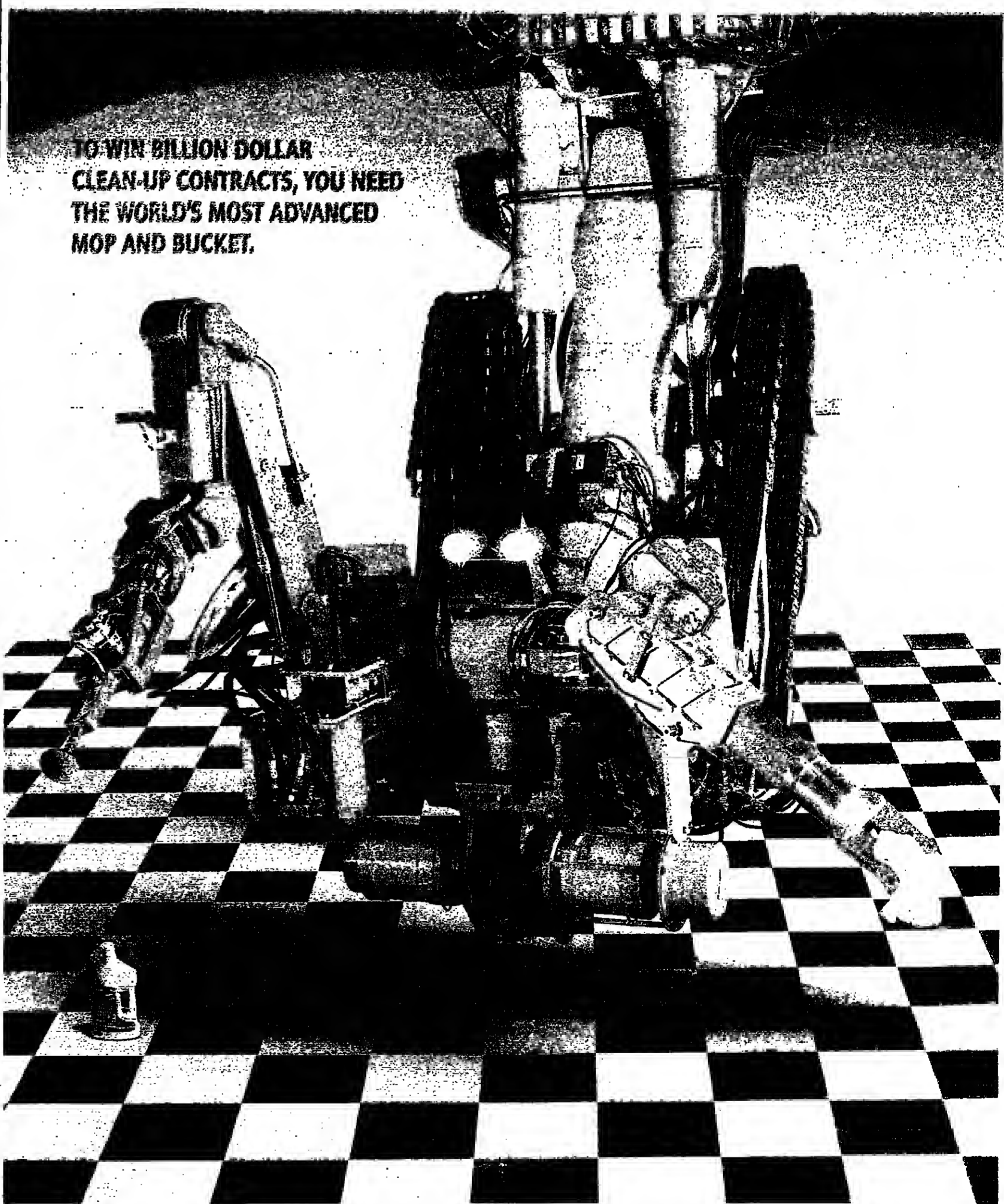
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Drink and drugs are part of life for young doctors

rt-maria's head into court

The portrait of a lady that brought old foes together

THE son of the woman who fought a long and unsuccessful court battle against the Thatcher Government for prescribing the pill to under-age teenagers without parental knowledge has painted the former Prime Minister's portrait.

Baroness Thatcher is delighted with the result. "She looks quite a formidable woman," she said of the painting. "Can I thank the artist for doing the impossible — a portrait of me in a way I would like to be remembered."

The artist, James Gillick, 26, is the son of the morality campaigner Victoria Gillick, who works as a counsellor for the anti-abortion organisation Life, and Gordon Gillick, a graphic artist.

Lady Thatcher, 72, who sat for three sessions, lasting almost eight hours, had been a model subject, the artist said. She watched Teletext, read avidly from a chemistry magazine and chatted about a range of subjects. Only one was off-limits — the old battle with his mother. Lady Thatcher was aware of the family link and a degree of tact was required. "The conversation was steered away from that sort of thing," he said.

Lady Thatcher had had initial misgivings about the portrait. During the sittings, she worried that the portrait might make her appear fierce. Gillick told her she was fierce and nothing more was said.

The oil-on-canvas portrait, commissioned by Buckingham University to mark the

Adrian Lee on a new painting of Baroness Thatcher by the artist son of Victoria Gillick

end of Lady Thatcher's six-year Chanceryship, depicts her in a blue and gold robe, seated in front of a background of red drapes. She wears a pearl necklace and clutches a piece of paper.

The sittings were conducted at her office in Belgravia. Gillick — who describes himself as a political neutral — said that Lady Thatcher had sat very still. Only once did she appear agitated — when she learnt of Labour's Budget from Teletext and flounced out of the room in high dudgeon. In calmer moments Lady Thatcher, a chemistry graduate, read *Chemistry Today*. She confided in the artist that she enjoyed her lecture tours abroad, but disliked entertaining at home.

The university declined to disclose the cost of the portrait. It is quite a coup for such a young artist, whose early memories include painting competitions set by his father. Gillick, one of ten children, said: "There was never any

question of me doing anything else." In the 1980s, when his forthright mother appeared regularly on television, he was bullied at school. But, he said yesterday, a solid family background had helped nurture his artistic talent.

His brother Ben, 30, who framed the portrait, agreed. "Our parents encouraged us to think freely. My mother's views were nothing to do with us — we were only children then. Although there were ten of us, we never lacked attention."

Mrs Gillick, 50, of Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, said she was proud of the achievements of all her children. "I have been criticised in the past for having so many children, but I have always felt the joy of having such a large family was watching them grow up in so many varied ways."

It was no surprise that James became an artist. In the Gillick household, television was banned and the children played with wood and clay instead of Lego.

Gordon Gillick said: "The children were coaxed into this sort of career. We always had paint, and basic materials around the house so they could be creative. I would never have spoken to them again if they had become accountants."

His artist son said that he had relished the challenge of capturing the "likeness of an icon". He had found Lady Thatcher charming but "when she looks you in the eye it's like looking at two Exocet missiles".



James Gillick and Baroness Thatcher at the unveiling of his portrait of her yesterday. She thanked him for painting her as a formidable woman



ARTISTIC STREAK RUNS THROUGH ALL TEN CHILDREN

IN A family where father was a graphic artist, and mother an artist turned morality campaigner, it was almost inevitable that the ten Gillick brothers and sisters should choose creative careers.

Ben, 30, the oldest, who in 1987 was convicted of possessing a knife, is a furniture designer and builder who works for the National Trust. He makes the frames for his brother James's pictures.

Beatrice, 28, who caused consternation to her mother when she was photographed by a tabloid newspaper while sunbathing topless in Greece 12 years ago, is now married

and a writer of children's books. Hannah, 27, who had a child outside marriage, is an interior designer currently working in London's Docklands on a new restaurant.

James, 26, who painted Baroness Thatcher, studied landscape architecture at Cheltenham and Gloucester College but turned to painting five years ago. He is married and lives in Buckingham. His twin, Theodore, studied genetic biology in Aberdeen but forsook a career in science to study sculpture in Bath.

Jessie, 23, is married with three children and adds to her family's income by drawing portraits of

other people's children. Gabriel, 21, has followed in the footsteps of his father, Gordon, by becoming a theatre set designer. He is currently working on designs for a new musical about the life of Picasso.

Sarah, 20, lives in Witney, Oxfordshire, where she is a graphic designer who illustrates books, including those by her sister Beatrice. Ambrose, 19, is working at a pea-processing factory to pay his way to Manchester University, where he intends to study architecture. Clementine, 16, the youngest, is studying for her A levels and hopes to follow a career in music.

McCartney releases Linda's songs



Linda: solo effort

BY CLAUDIA JOSEPH

A COLLECTION of songs written and recorded by Linda McCartney is being released on CD by her husband as a tribute to her after she died from cancer in April.

Lady McCartney, who played keyboards in her husband's band, Wings, composed 13 of the 16 solo songs on the album *Wide Prairie*

over three decades and recorded the final tracks in the months before her death.

Sir Paul produced the CD, on which he sings the harmonies and their son, James, plays the guitar. It will be released at the end of October.

Geoff Baker, a close friend and spokesman for the family, said: "This is one of the things that Linda wanted to do and I think she would have

been very proud of it. It includes everything from ballads to pop songs, punk and reggae as well as reflecting her views on animal welfare and vegetarianism."

The title song was premiered last month at the Edinburgh Film Festival. Lady McCartney wrote the lyrics and music that backed her short animated film, *Wide Prairie*.

Old Lennon tracks rediscovered

DOZENS of previously unheard tracks by John Lennon are to be released after being discovered in the vaults of Capitol Records in America.

The recordings will be issued in a four-CD boxed set on November 3, according to *Billboard* music magazine. It will reportedly be called *The John Lennon Anthology*.

Phil Cappell, a Beatles tour guide, said reports that Yoko Ono, the singer's widow, was serving as executive producer for the set and that the couple's son, Sean,

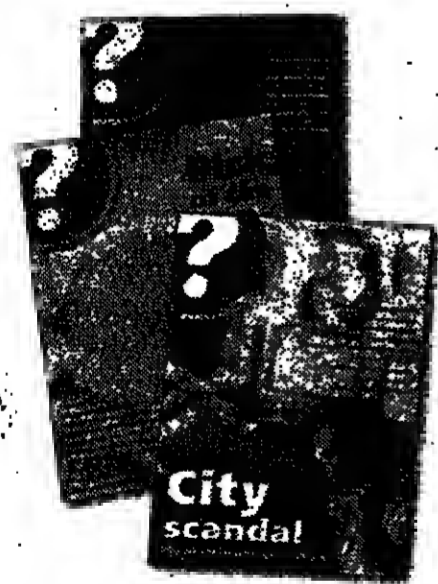
would have a creative input might be greeted with scepticism. "Some people are going to question whether Yoko is just trying to push her son. For many people, the jury is still out about Sean Lennon's musical ability," he said.

Three years ago an unfinished home recording of Lennon's *Free As A Bird* became an instant hit when it was released after the surviving Beatles completed it.

Stephen Bailey, manager of the Beatles Shop near the site of the Cavern Club

where the group first made its name, said he was sure his store would sell out of the tracks as soon as they stocked the shelves. "Some of these things, by their very nature, are rough-sounding," he said. "They were recorded at home on primitive equipment — basically a man sitting at home with his guitar and his piano and a tape recorder having a good time." That quality, plus the chance to hear previously unrecorded material, would make the planned anthology a hit with fans, he added.

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Europe's ski resorts are going downhill

The British are heading west as crowded Alpine slopes lose their charm, writes

Joanna Bale

MORE Britons are heading for North American ski resorts because European centres suffer from complacency and under-investment, according to a Consumers' Association guide published yesterday.

Most resorts on the Continent have failed to meet the needs of visitors, with overcrowding, rising prices and lack of courtesy topping the list of complaints, the guide says. The number of skiers crossing the Atlantic has risen tenfold, because skiers are "no longer prepared to pay high prices for second-rate service". Even Swiss and Austrians are forsaking their own slopes to head west.

Canadian and US resorts attract about 65,000 British skiers — more than 20 per cent of the British ski market. Eight years ago, they accounted for only about 3 per cent. Traditionally, flying to destinations in the American Rockies has been difficult, involving up to three changes of aircraft. However, a daily scheduled British Airways service to Denver has just been introduced, complementing



European resorts, such as Verbier, suffer from under-investment, says the guide

the existing tour operators' weekly charter service.

The favourable exchange rate of the pound against the Canadian dollar and, to a lesser extent the American dollar, means that tour operators can offer holidays there at prices competitive with European destinations.

The average North American ski resort will offer a smaller ski area than many

European destinations but slopes are less crowded, snow conditions more reliable and lift systems superior. Those who still favour European resorts do so because off-piste skiing in the European sense does not exist in North America. While a few big resorts allow large areas to be left untouched by machines, leaving the designated ski area is forbidden. Breaking the rules

can result in confiscation of ski passes and even arrest. Leading destinations, such as Verbier, in Switzerland, and Kitzbühel, in Austria, are "paupers" in comparison to leading American resorts. *The Good Skiing and Snowboarding Guide 1999*, from Which? Books, concludes.

While billions of dollars are being invested in upgrading North American resorts such

as Vail, Creek, Breckenridge and Keystone, Verbier has yet to replace an antiquated cable-car system at a cost of £5 million. In the Italian resort of Cervinia, cable cars that were closed for safety reason five years ago have yet to be replaced.

The guide's editors, Peter Hardy and Felice Eyston, said yesterday: "The simple truth is that North America offers

better value for money. The lift systems are superior, there is more space on the slopes and in the hotels — and the way visitors are welcomed is incomparable.

The Americans are not just keeping up with the needs of today's skiers and snowboarders, but are anticipating them. Combine that with favourable exchange rates and package prices and you have a

UPS AND DOWNS

VERBIER:
Good points:
 Easy rail and road access
 Wealth of off-piste
 Excellent sunshine record
 Summer glacier skiing
Bad points:
 Queues and overcrowding
 High prices for après-ski
 Minimal hotel accommodation
 Inadequate mountain restaurants
 Traffic and difficult parking

BANFF (the most popular destination in North America for British skiers)
Good points:
 Spectacular scenery
 Reliable snow record
 Long skiing season
 Extensive children's facilities
 Few queues
Bad points:
 Strung-out resorts
 Extremely low temperatures
 Lack of slope-side lodging



Banff, in the Canadian Rockies, offers wide open spaces, hospitality and good snow

winning formula. Europe is no longer competing."

Mr Hardy added: "The question is: would holiday-makers rather pay £5 for a bowl of cold chips in the Trois Vallées, or for a sumptuous hot buffet in Lake Louise?"

It is not just Britons making the journey. Mr Hardy added: "The Swiss and the Austrians, in particular, are beginning to head across the

Atlantic in large numbers, along with Dutch and Germans, instead of using resorts on their own doorsteps."

The British skiing exodus to North America is part of the growing popularity of the US as a holiday destination in general. The latest figures show that in 1995 2.3 million Britons visited the US for holidays, compared with 1.8 million in 1980.

Matthew Parris, page 20

Viewers to be asked: do you want News at Ten?

BY RAYMOND SNODDY, MEDIA EDITOR

VIEWERS are to be consulted on ITV's plans to replace *News at Ten* with a main evening news at 6.30pm.

The Independent Television Commission, the regulatory body that will decide the fate of the programme, said yesterday that it wanted to hear viewers' opinions. The commission is also conducting independent audience research to make sure that it hears from a wide range of people.

A previous attempt to move the programme was opposed by John Major, then Prime Minister. This time Tony Blair is among those who have said that *News at Ten* should stay where it is.

The ITC said yesterday that its approval was not usually necessary for ITV schedule changes. But in this case the commission has a legal responsibility under broadcasting legislation to ensure that

ITV carries high-quality national and international news at intervals throughout the day, and during peak viewing — from 6pm to 10.30pm — by all the companies simultaneously. To their 1991 licence applications, eight of the regional licence holders said that they planned to broadcast the main news at 10pm.

Sarah Thane, the ITC director of programmes and cable, said yesterday: "We want to know what viewers think of these proposed changes in news provision, including regional programmes, and the introduction of a wider range of programmes in the 9-11pm period."

The commission, which hopes to rule on *News at Ten* by the end of November, promises that the opinion of viewers will be one of a range of factors taken into account. The ITC is about to disappoint those who want to see

the early closure of existing analogue broadcasting transmission in favour of digital. The Government would like to aim for a switch-off in ten years so that broadcasting frequencies can be auctioned off for other more lucrative use, such as mobile telephone communications. For that to happen everyone will have to have digital equipment to be able to continue receiving television signals.

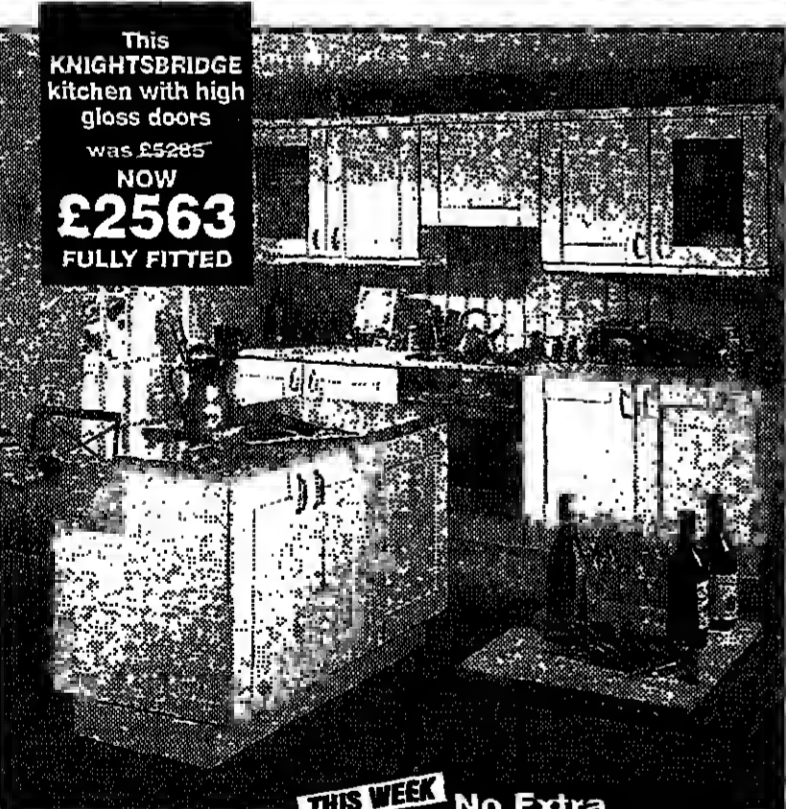
The ITC plans to tell the Government that the transition could take longer than 15 years. Viewers will have to replace not just the main household television set but all their additional sets and video recorders as well.

The Culture, Media and Sport department began a consultation process on the issue of the switch-off earlier this year.

Matthew Parris, page 20

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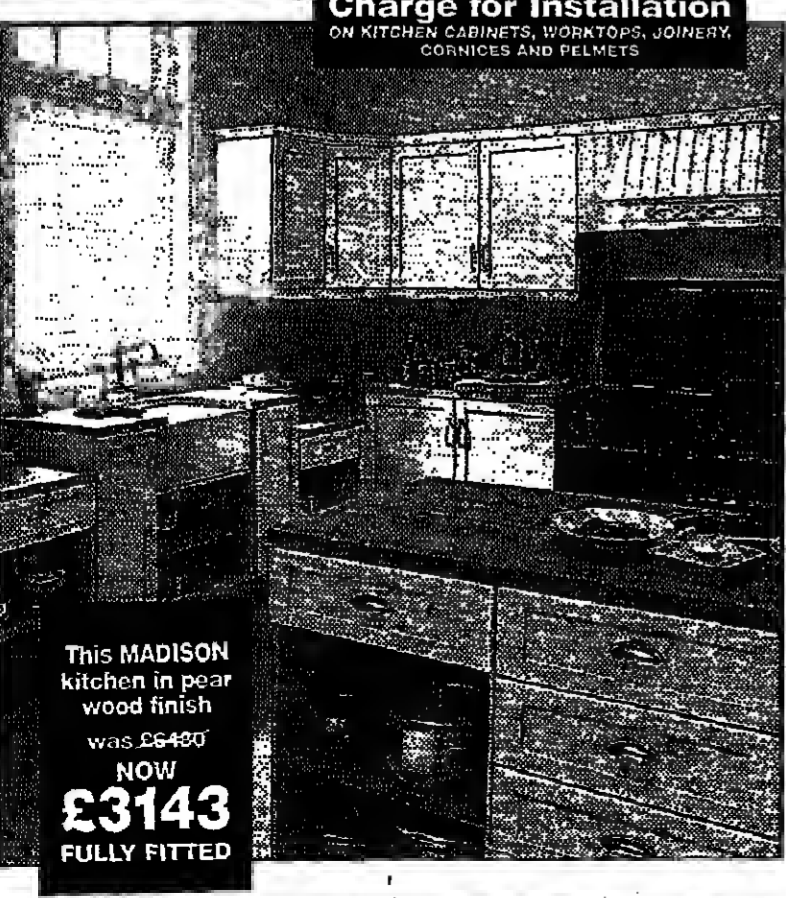
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Old Newcastle swept away by steam age

By PAUL WILKINSON

THOMAS Richardson's idyllic view across the Tyne to the chimneys and garrets of old Newcastle, tumbling down its steep valley from the castle, owes more to artistic licence than to architectural accuracy. Experts at the Laing Gallery in the city, where the picture now hangs, believe it was not executed on the spot but worked on over a number of weeks in Richardson's studio from a series of sketches drawn along the river.

Painted soon after the turn of the 18th century, it depicts a scene that was about to give way to the 19th-century view an observer would find today. It is undated, but, by simple examination of local records, it can be fairly accurately placed at 1810. The crenellations visible on the turrets of the 12th-century Norman keep were added in 1809 at the same time that the old fortification was given a roof. Those "improvements" coincided with an upswing in intellectual interest in "antiquities" and the purchase of the castle by the city council, inconspicuously, to preserve it. Little else of the Conqueror's New Castle on the site of Hadrian's Roman fort has survived the arrival of the railway age at the Central station less than 200 yards away, although shreds of curtain wall do appear elsewhere in the city. In the distance behind the keep is the distinctive crown cupola of St Nicholas's Church, a style that became a



The Times continues its series on how scenes by great British artists have changed

No 11: Thomas Richardson Sr Newcastle from the Tyne 1810

model for many other tower tops around the country. When Richardson did his painting it was just a parish church, but since the 1880s it has been the cathedral see of the Bishop of Newcastle.

Nothing remains today of the scramble of Richardson's waterside rooflines, even though some of the medieval buildings out of sight behind them still survive as the heart of a thriving night scene. So do the famous Newcastle Chares, narrow flights of granite steps, lacing through what was once a hugganugger dockside community up the valley side to the city beyond.

In Richardson's day the area was beginning to decline from a smart business and residential one to a less salubrious dockland maelstrom. What had been home to the merchant and professional classes who made their living from the river and lived "over the shop", was becoming a

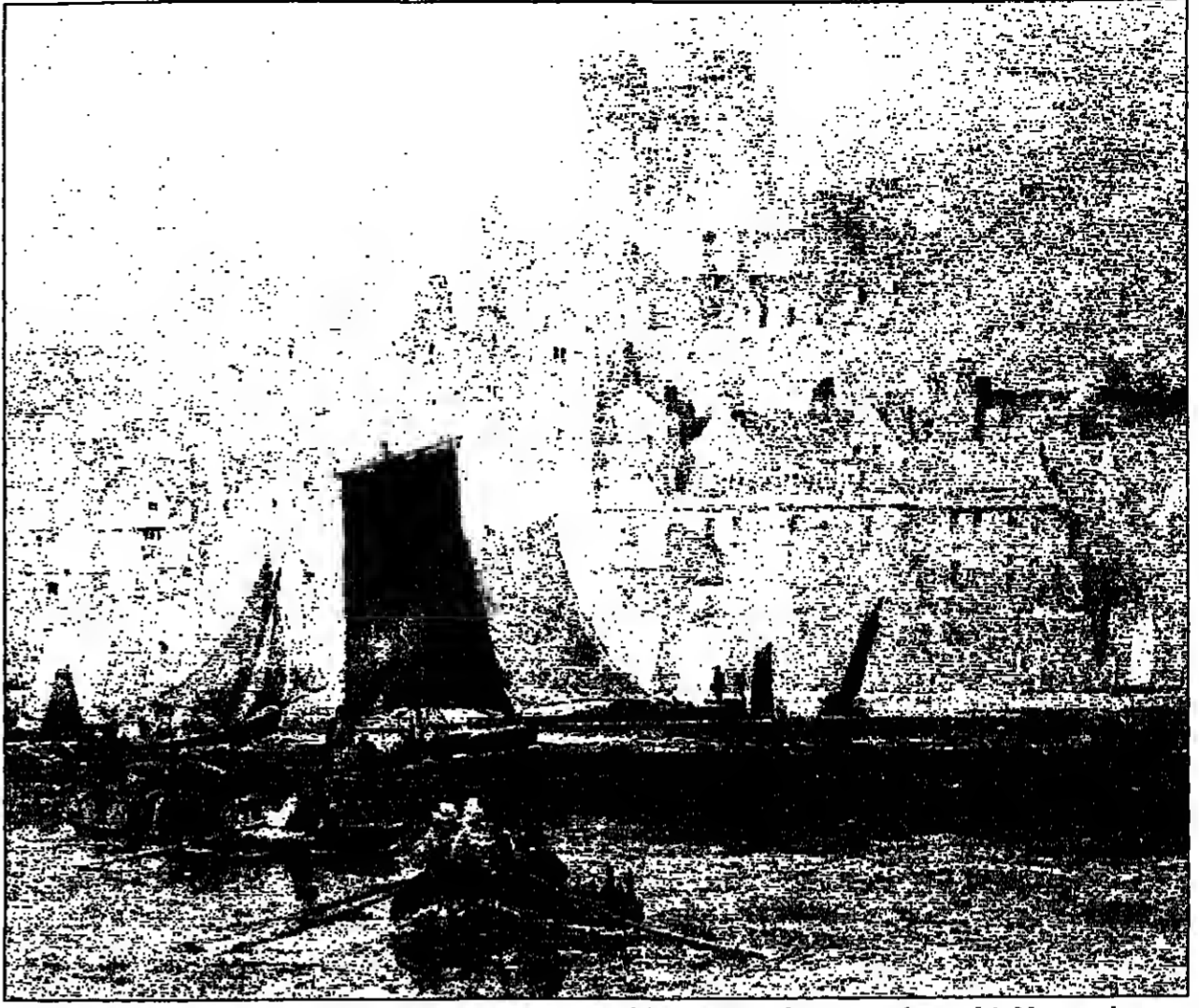
warren of tenements. Many of the houses dated from the late medieval period and some in the 18th century had been given stone façades on the original timber frontage. But by the time Richardson set up his easel, many of the moneyed classes were moving out of the noisy and congested dockside to fashionable neo-classical terraces being built to the north of the city. Some quayside houses made way in 1880 for the fish market, a single-storey, seven-

bayed Baroque-style building now reinvented as Neptune House, home to "sunrise" industries such as architecture and design.

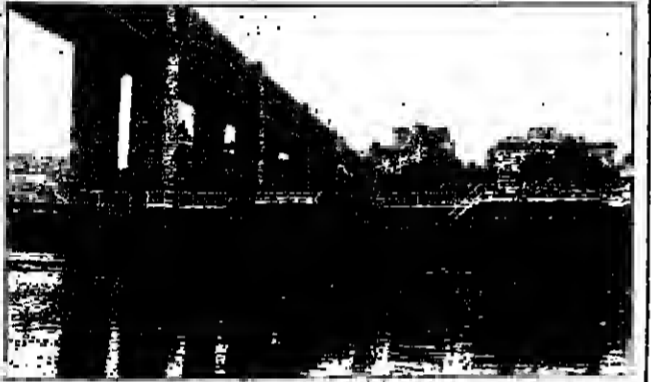
By then the multistoreyed building with three chimney-topped gable ends in Richardson's picture, below and to the left of the castle, had already gone. It was replaced in 1845 by the northern abutment of the High Level bridge on the left of the photograph as the industrial age steamed stoutly into Tyneside.

The design, by Robert Stephenson, was picked from 19 proposals, including one from Brunel, to fulfil the need for a high-level approach from the south to the new station of the Newcastle and Berwick railway on the high ground above the river valley. It stands 120ft above the low-water mark.

Richardson's view is taken from where the bridge's southern end now stands. Apart from some strengthening in the 1920s to sustain the weight of trams on the road, it is as designed by Stephenson 150 years ago.



Little survives today from the 1810 painting by Thomas Richardson, Senior, except the castle's Norman keep



The High Level bridge now dominates the view

Atlantic blast to banish summer

By MARK HENDERSON

BRITAIN will feel the first blast of autumn this weekend as the remnants of hurricane Danielle bring high winds and rain to many parts of the country.

Gales and heavy rain are expected in western and northern areas on Saturday and Sunday as the weather system reaches the British Isles across the Atlantic, and most of the country is likely to see an end to what little warm and dry weather it has enjoyed over the summer.

The arrival of the Danielle system follows the remnants of hurricane Bonnie, which contributed to more than an inch of rain across central and southern England in the early hours of yesterday. The weather today is expected to remain relatively dry as we enjoy a lull between the two depressions.

Martin Rowley, a Met Office forecaster, said we would start to feel seasonal changes in the weather from this weekend. "We will be waving goodbye to what has passed for a summer," he said. "The West and the North, which have had pretty poor weather throughout the summer, are certainly going to see gales, and while eastern areas might escape the worst of it and have a dry Saturday, the weather on Sunday is going to be pretty windy all over."

He said strong winds would be matched by "heavy and persistent rain" in many parts of the country, though it was too early to say with precision which areas would be worst affected.

Forecast, page 26

NEWS IN BRIEF

RAF pilot escapes jet crash

The pilot of a Jaguar fighter bomber ejected to safety as his aircraft crashed into the North Sea during a low-level practice flight from RAF Leconfield. He spent 40 minutes in the water 13 miles off Cromer, Norfolk, before being rescued by a helicopter crew. The Ministry of Defence said the cause of the accident was not yet known.

Boy, 11, drowns

Nathan Ford Fennah, 11, of Hawarden, Flintshire, drowned at the Northgate Arena leisure centre in Chester on Wednesday despite efforts by a lifeguard and paramedics to save him. It was the last day of his school holiday.

Car deaths

A young mother is believed to have gassed her two children and herself in the family car after a row with her estranged husband. The three, from Reading, were found in woods near Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire.

Big top stolen

Thieves stole a £70,000 big top and other equipment from a van after the Sheffield Swamp Circus — one of Britain's few non-animal touring companies — had finished a run of shows at Heaton Park in Manchester.

Eye for a bargain

A collection of 81 glass eyes has been sold for £400. "They are incredibly detailed," Roger Tappin, the auctioneer at Phillips in Par, Cornwall, said. "Some are even slightly bloodshot for that 'morning after the night before' look."

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Gene crops are food of future, say scientists

By NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

GENETICALLY modified crops have the potential to feed the world's booming populations of the 21st century and their development should be encouraged, the Royal Society said yesterday.

Strains genetically engineered to produce bumper yields or to grow on salty or other marginal soils, are all possible in the coming years.

Sir Aaron Klug, President of the Royal Society, said yesterday that such plant breeding technology offered hope for feeding the eight billion people likely to be alive in 2020. It would also help the environment and wildlife by reducing the need to destroy rainforests or to drain wetlands for farmland.

Some groups including environmental organisations have called for a moratorium on the cultivating of gene-altered crops to allow for further research. They fear that such plants may harm beneficial insects and may cross with wild living relatives to produce "super weeds".

There are also concerns over the health of consumers.

But the Royal Society working group, in advice to ministers, argues that the risks are being overplayed. It adds that unilateral action by the British Government would be folly as genetic engineering is now worldwide. Banning or stalling the cultivation of crops which have been approved in other countries would probably put Britain in breach of World Trade Organisation rules, the scientists say.

Critics have expressed concern that the technology will be in the hands of a few western multinationals who could force the Third World to pay high prices.

But Dr Mike Gale of the John Innes Centre in Norwich, which carries out research into gene-modified plants, said yesterday that the centre had students from developing countries studying genetic engineering. They were taking the technology back to their own countries. Sir Aaron said: "Although

the debate surrounding genetically modified organisms has focused mainly upon the risks of this technology, we must not lose sight of its huge potential benefits.

"Just as the food requirements of today's population of nearly six billion could not have been met by the technologies of the 1940s, we cannot assume that current practices will feed the population of eight billion expected by 2020. New approaches are needed in addition to the continued improvement of existing methods of crop and animal husbandry and food processing," he said.

The Royal Society nevertheless has made a string of recommendations to ensure the development of such crops is well policed.

It is calling for an independent regulatory body to supervise and monitor the enforcement of regulations covering the growing of such crops. It would also be responsible for wider issues such as trade and labelling.

WHAT MAKES WORM A PARTY ANIMAL

The difference between being a shy, retiring wallflower or a chatty party animal may be down to a single gene. Scientists studying roundworms have found a genetic difference between those that dine alone and those that feed in sociable groups. It is hoped the findings may help to shed light on the development of innate behaviours, particularly social ones, in animals and man. The research, published in *Cell*, has been carried out by a team at the University of California San Francisco. The genetic difference was found to be a single amino acid on a gene called neuropeptide Y. Once modified, a solitary worm became chummy with its fellows.



Mike Oldfield rehearsing at Horse Guards Parade yesterday. *Tubular Bells III* has its premiere there tonight

Modern music invades the parade ground

By VALERIE ELLIOTT, WHITEHALL EDITOR

ONE of the traditional venues for state occasions will be rocked tonight as Horse Guards Parade plays host to its first pop concert (Valerie Elliott writes).

Mike Oldfield is to stage the world premiere of *Tubular Bells III* within earshot of Buckingham Palace and with a prime view from Downing Street. The 7,000 ticketed outdoor concert was declared almost a sell-out by the organisers, but members of the Royal Family will miss the two-hour extravaganza and the Blairs are expected to be at Chequers.

The timing is, of course, deliberate. Before Simon Petherick, chairman of the company, could arrange the show he had to get permission from the Palace. No 10, the Ministry of Defence and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. They were all keen but cautious about the idea, and Mr Petherick was told: "Do it when everyone is away and Parliament is not sitting."

He had to notify everyone of rehearsals, road closures,

and on no account was the daily ceremony of Changing the Guard to be disturbed.

He also had to consult the august friends of St James's Park, the Thorney Island Society, which banned fireworks. Jane Stubbs, society chairman, said: "We are concerned about the impact on the wildfowl. Birds are very sensitive and we are worried about the noise levels. This is a very special and small park, and is very precious to the people. If concerts are to be more frequent they are going to have to watch the seasons. We don't want anything to disturb egg-laying."

The concert is a trial for the Royal Parks Enterprises company, set up last year to drum up funds for the Royal Parks Agency. If it is successful, Horseguards could become a familiar, regular concert venue, generating thousands of pounds for the royal parks.

But Mr Petherick refused to disclose the price for staging a show on such an historic site. However, events organisers estimated that the staging could cost some £250,000.

Heaney on stage

A UNIQUE opportunity to hear Seamus Heaney read from *Opened Ground*, his new selection of poems written between 1966 and 1996, is being offered to Times readers.

Heaney, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1995, will be reading from his new book at Piccadilly Theatre, London, at 7pm on Sunday. This will be his only public appearance. By presenting a copy of this article, Times readers will receive a £5 discount on signed copies of *Opened Ground*, which are selling at £20 in hardback and £12.99 in paperback.

Tickets cost £10 and £12, with proceeds going to Waterstone's charity of the year, The Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture. They can be obtained by ringing 0171



Heaney will read from his new book

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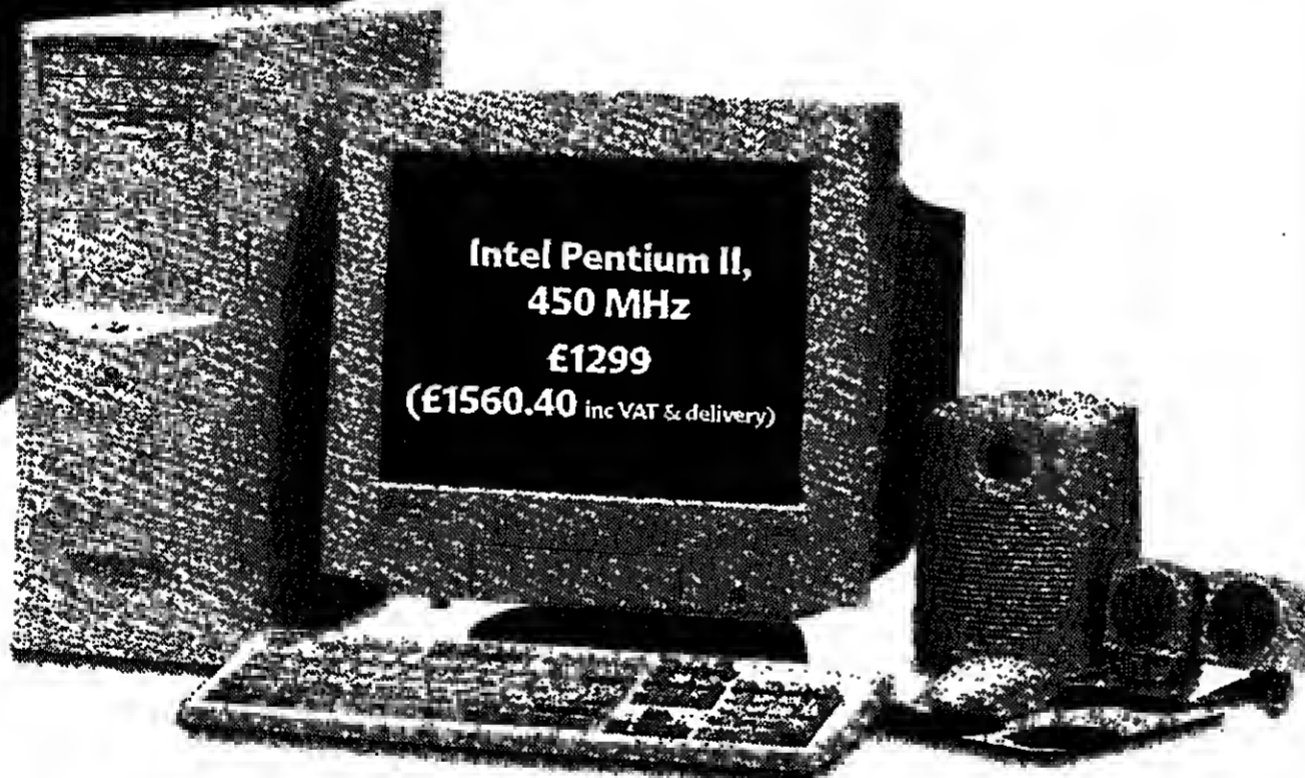
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Serb shells and bulldozers smash pledges

FROM TOM WALKER IN PRIZREN

PRESIDENT Milosevic of Yugoslavia bumbled the West again yesterday. His talk of a three-year peace framework in Kosovo was belied by fresh shelling in two previously untouched areas of the province, and more wanton destruction by his security forces who bulldozed the main street of the Albanian guerrillas' former chief town.

Contact Group observers and journalists alike were turned back from both regions under attack, one comprising a handful of villages between the central towns of Orahovac and Dakovica, and the other a rocky upland bisected by gorges southwest of Prizren, stretching down to the Albanian border. There the Albanians said they had sustained heavy losses, with as many as 40 dead, but sources in Prizren also claimed the Kosovo Liberation Army had captured three Yugoslav army tanks.

Today John Shattuck, US Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, arrives in Pristina, and at the weekend the Republican Senator Robert Dole will fly into town. Mr Milosevic is sailing close to the wind, and it was difficult yesterday to define the Serb strategy in Kosovo, where an opponent already well beaten appears to be taking a merciless drubbing.

The Serbs claimed both fresh clampdowns were the result of KLA attacks, but many diplomats wondered if Belgrade was trying to annihilate the KLA before American pressure is such that Nato



Milosevic: no mercy to crushed rebel towns

intervention again becomes a threat.

The sound of shellfire has reverberated around the Lume region, southwest of Prizren, for the last 48 hours. Lume is a cross-border upland with a history of violent revolt, and has a substantial population of Muslim Slavs, known as Gorans.

A KLA source in Prizren claimed weapons smugglers bringing in arms from Albania inadvertently wandered into a Goran village, where a fight ensued and the Gorans — who are often pro-Belgrade — alerted the security forces.

He said that the first army convoy to weave its way through the treacherous ravines was attacked and forced to withdraw, leaving three of its TSS tanks with the KLA who had threatened to blow up one of the three bridges that cross the Bistrica and Drina rivers and link Lume to Kosovo.

Confirming either Albanian or Serb accounts was impossi-

ble yesterday, but shellfire could be heard and several truckloads of police and troops were seen embarking on the long dirt road towards the villages of Ljubicevo and Jaskovo. "They have destroyed everything, the villages are flattened," said an Albanian in a nearby gorge, who had fled from his home village.

"When we saw 30 tanks coming, we knew something was badly wrong," said the KLA source in Prizren. Thousands more refugees appeared to have swollen the mass of homeless who are already clogging the town's narrow cobble streets.

Driving north towards Dakovica, the skyline was stained by dozens of smoke plumes rising from villages south of Orahovac. "You've got to go back, you've already seen quite enough," was all one policeman could offer as an explanation.

A crippled armoured personnel carrier missing its tracks was driven past, indicating that all had not gone smoothly for the army. The Serb media centre in Pristina said the KLA had mounted "synchronised" assaults overnight against the security forces, and "the chase after the attackers is still under way".

Thirteen "loyalist" Albanians working for the Serb Forestry Commission were kidnapped in the north of the province on Wednesday, near the town of Podujevo.

"It is a region that always explodes late in any revolt," said Dejan Anastasievic of the Belgrade weekly, *Vreme*. "But when it does, there is real trouble."



A woman and her children protest yesterday in front of riot police preparing to storm a factory owned by Mando Machinery, the South Korean maker of car parts. Police raided seven of the company's plants to break up an 18-day strike

Clinton faces new funding investigation

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT CLINTON is facing yet more trouble — a new investigation by the Justice Department into campaign fundraising. This is an old threat that the White House thought had been safely buried, but it could now resurface.

Janet Reno, the Attorney-General, has embarked on the first stages of an inquiry into whether Mr Clinton was closely involved in designing the Democratic advertising blitz before the 1996 elections, illegally reshaping messages about the party's policies into ones specifically helping his individual campaign.

The new investigation is part of a flurry of activity by Ms Reno, a presidential appointment who has been bitterly accused by Republicans of being soft on Mr Clinton. She is also at an advanced stage in two separate preliminary inquiries, into the raising of campaign funds by Al Gore, the Vice-President, and the accuracy of congressional testimony given by Harold Ickes, the former presidential aide.

While all three inquiries are at an early stage, they could lead her eventually to recommend the appointment of independent prosecutors to investigate the matter further — a nightmare the White

House is desperate to avoid. Kenneth Starr, the special prosecutor investigating the Lewinsky scandal, has dogged Mr Clinton's life for more than four years, since his early investigation of the President's financial dealings in Arkansas. A campaign finance inquiry would similarly eat up resources, and could put Democratic donors of making donations to Mr Gore's campaign in 2000.

David Kendall, Mr Clinton's private lawyer, who is still battling with the legal fallout from the Monica Lewinsky affair, met Justice Department officials on Wednesday in an attempt to head off a deeper investigation. If a formal inquiry is launched, he wants it to be directed at the 1996 campaign, not at Mr Clinton personally.

But Republicans, who are enthusiastic over Ms Reno's apparent new aggression, are wary of an investigation into the entire 1996 campaign, because Bob Dole, their presidential candidate, could also be accused of wrongly influencing party advertising.

The Republican National Committee, like its Democratic counterpart, ran advertisements starring its candidate. Under US law, party advertising must focus on issues rather than individuals.

Florence uncovers secret walkway to Uffizi

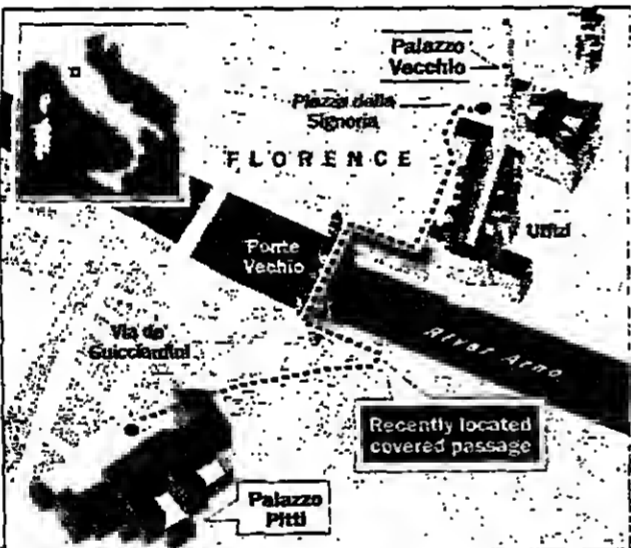
FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

A SECRET covered walkway across the River Arno in Florence built by the powerful Medici family in Renaissance times so that they could cross to the other side without being seen is being opened to the public after 500 years.

The passage runs from the Palazzo Vecchio and the Uffizi gallery to the Palazzo Pitti and the Boboli Gardens on the other side of the river. The key section is the "Vasari Corridor" or walkway that runs along the top of the 14th-century Ponte Vecchio, one of the world's oldest and longest-surviving covered bridges.

Visitors browsing in the ancient shops that line the picturesque bridge are often unaware that a closed passageway lies just above their heads. It was built during the reign of Duke Cosimo de Medici (1519-1574), the patron of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, so that members of the Medici family could go from one great palace to another without having to set foot in the street. It was constructed in only five months, and five workmen lost their lives because of the haste. "It was the first city skyway, a Renaissance rooftop passage," *La Repubblica* said.

The idea for the walkway arose when the Pitti family,



the Medici's historic rivals in banking and business, were obliged to sell their huge unfinished palace to a triumphant Duke Cosimo in 1549 after running up catastrophic debts. Five years later, Cosimo ordered the passageway to be built to connect the Pitti with the Palazzo Vecchio and its adjoining administrative block, the Uffizi (which means offices in Italian), now the world-famous art gallery.

The architect was Giorgio Vasari, the noted Renaissance artist and historian, who built a covered corridor from the Palazzo Vecchio, along the quayside (formerly given over to a fish market) and along the top of the Ponte Vecchio, which dates from 1345. According to some accounts, the corridor was intended to mark the marriage of Cosimo's eldest son Francesco to Joan of Austria in 1565. It linked the "younger Medici", who took up residence in the Pitti, with Cosimo and his beautiful wife, Eleanor of Toledo (whose portrait by Bronzino hangs in the Wallace Collection); the latter lived in the Palazzo Vecchio.

The Ponte Vecchio, lined with jewellers' shops, survived the end of the Second World War, when retreating German troops blew up all other Florentine bridges. But the secret passage was made unsafe by the force of the explosions. The Ponte Vecchio was further damaged in the 1966 floods, and in 1993 when the Mafia bombed targets in Florence in a vain attempt to destabilise the Government's anti-Mafia crackdown.

Antonio Paolucci, the former Minister of Culture who is now in charge of Florence's cultural heritage, said that from next Tuesday visitors would be able to look through windows and archways in the walkway over the rooftops of Florence to the great Cathedral Dome designed by Brunelleschi and the maze of medieval lanes in which Dante once walked. He said the passage would be open for groups of 30 tourists at a time, in an experiment that could last until November. "But we hope to make it a permanent part of the Florence experience for the Millennium," he said.

Poorly equipped firefighters fail to tame Amazon forest flames

FROM GABRIELLA GAMINI IN RIO DE JANEIRO

AUTHORITIES in Brazil have declared a state of emergency in several southern Amazon rainforest states as devastating fires — which have in the past week spread into Indian reservations and are killing wildlife and cattle — rage out of control.

Gustavo Krause, the Environment Minister, this week announced an \$8.9 million fund for firefighting efforts in the states of Mato Grosso, Para, Goias, Rondonia, Tocantins and Bahia, the states worst affected.

"A state of emergency has been imposed and we will send out firefighting teams to the areas in flames," Senator Krause said. But environmental agencies condemned



the action as being "too little, too late". The first report of the fires, and satellite images showing there were 32,000 blazes over an area five times the size of Britain, were available two weeks ago.

Firefighters have been sent to São José de Kingá, outside the reserve, where 150,000 acres and some 500 heads of cattle were charred by fire. Rainforest-covered valleys which were once filled with sloths, leopards and dozens of monkey species have been turned into charred cemeteries of tree skeletons.

"Thousands of animals have been killed, although we have rescued several baby monkeys who managed to get away," said a spokesman of the Ibama, Brazil's cash-strapped official environmental protection agency.

Ipatana says it does not know how much land has already been swept away but Brazilian press reports say 3,700,000 acres have already

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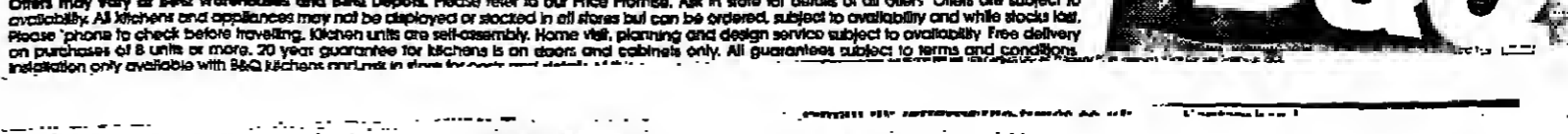
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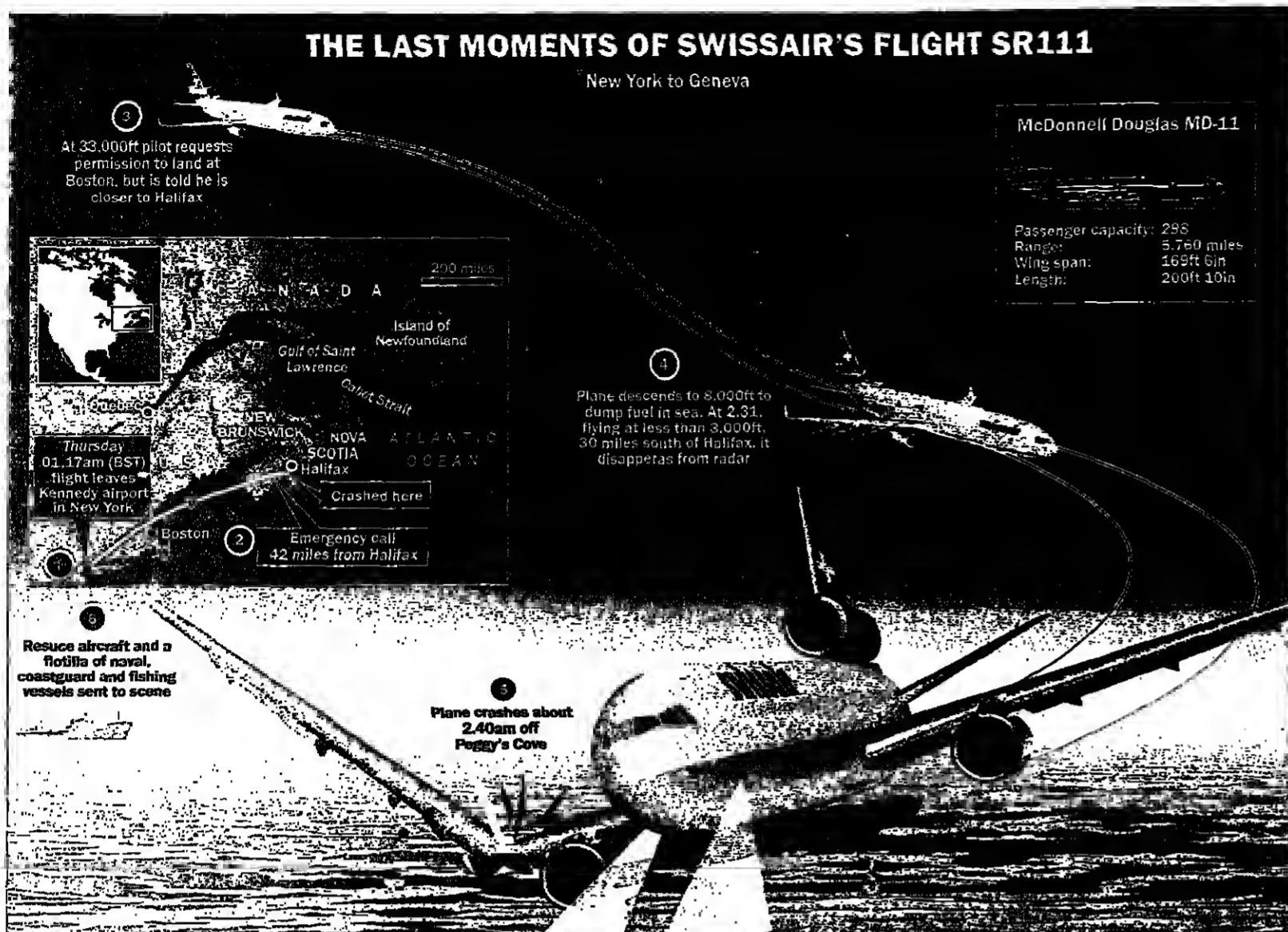
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Flames started journey to disaster

RUBEN SPRICH / REUTERS



Relatives of passengers on the stricken Swissair jet weep at Geneva airport after learning that all 229 people had died in the crash. The plane came down less than an hour after leaving New York

Cards stacked against aircrew

THE crew of Swissair Flight 111 faced every pilot's worst nightmare when they discovered a fire aboard their aircraft. Whatever its origin, whether electrical, in the engines, structure, cabin or hold, combustion poses a mortal threat to an aircraft's ability to stay airborne and to all life aboard.

The rule in such an emergency is simple: get the plane onto the ground or, failing that, water. But the bigger the craft, the tougher the job.

Although routinely rehearsed on simulators for such emergencies, the pilots of the McDonnell Douglas faced a monumental task in trying to bring the big strliner back for a landing at Halifax. For a start, even if the engines and flight controls had been working when they attempted their emergency descent and approach to Halifax, the crew would have had to fight the devastating effects of smoke on the flight deck.

The pilots would have used smoke masks and oxygen equipment as they scrambled to assess the damage, reading through emergency checklists to tackle the fire, dump a heavy load of fuel, and set up

Charles Bremner, a qualified pilot, on the paralyzing effects of fire, the worst fear of those on the flight deck

an approach to Halifax. Even without heat and intoxication, smoke can make it impossible to read the instruments or handle the automatic pilot. Visibility outside the cockpit, vital for final approach, especially to water, can become non-existent.

Airliners have made suc-

cessful landings with on-board fires, but they are the exception.

The Swissair crew was clearly also blighted with deteriorating control. An early Swissair account said they had first reported a problem to air traffic control when they were still in the Boston region on their flight northwards from New York, and still 400 miles from Halifax. But it was not clear why they failed to attempt a landing at Boston's Logan airport. As soon as the

COCKPIT PERIL

would have needed power on at least one of the three turbofan engines, plus use of the hydraulically powered control surfaces on the wings and tail and at least information from the basic instruments on airspeed and altitude.

Even without the engines, but with the other controls working, big modern airliners have twice over the past 15 years been glided to immaculate landings, once in Canada and once in the American South.

All the cards seemed to have been stacked against the Swiss crew as they struggled with loss of control and fire over the sea at night. Among the many obstacles was the necessity to unload tonnes of fuel to bring the heavily loaded aircraft down to an acceptable landing weight. The process would have consumed at least ten valuable minutes.

Early reports that spoke of unusual engine noise, suggested that the pilots had abandoned hope of reaching Halifax and may have been attempting to put their plane down on the water. Ditching a big aircraft at sea is exceedingly perilous, even when under full control. The exercise requires high skills in "hand flying" and plenty of luck. The crew must slow down to minimum speed, at least about 130mph in the case of this airliner, and "flare" the aircraft gently onto the water, taking into account the wind and sea conditions.

In the most recent case of a crash-landing, in November 1996, a hijacked Ethiopian airliner broke up on impact, killing 127 people, when it was ditched in the Indian Ocean under full control.

Airport vigil ends in rollcall of those who would never arrive

FROM ADAM SAGE IN GENEVA AND TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK

AT 11am yesterday, Dr Pierre Froidaveaux took it on himself to tell relatives waiting at Geneva airport that there were no survivors among the 229 passengers and crew on Flight SR111.

As he read out the names of the dead to relatives in an emergency room at the airport, most of the 100 or so people gathered to hear him broke down and wept. Others cried out: "Oh, my God, he was there," shrieked a woman who had lost her grandson.

Dr Froidaveaux, head of the 40-strong emergency medical team put in place by the Swiss authorities said later: "Until then, many people had refused to believe that their loved ones had died. They kept on saying that their relatives knew how to swim, that they would have put on a lifejacket, that somehow they made it."

"Even though the authorities had not officially confirmed the deaths, I could not let the lie go on any longer.

We had to confront them with reality and let the grieving process begin.

"Everyone was gathered in the middle of the room and I had placed members of the medical team around them to intervene swiftly if they lost control or fainted. Those who wanted to cry were allowed to cry, and those who wanted to leave were allowed to leave."

Among those who rushed out of the airport was an elegant Swiss woman with tears smearing her make-up and running down onto her white T-shirt. She was too distressed to talk.

Lidia Pizzo, a Mexican living in Switzerland, said her sister had been on the plane. "I invited her, I paid for her to come, and now she is dead," she said.

By yesterday evening just ten relatives were still receiving counselling from Dr Froidaveaux's team of doctors and psychiatrists. "There was a mother who had lost her son and a girlfriend who had lost

RELATIVES' AGONY

her boyfriend," Dr Froidaveaux said. "They cannot bring themselves to accept that what they are living through is true. It is horrible."

There were similar human dramas in New York, where local newspapers highlighted the case of a distraught grey-haired man who pushed his way through a crowd at John F. Kennedy Airport, saying: "I know somebody on this flight."

As a throng of reporters closed around him, police escorted him away. They extended the same protection to a middle-aged man who said he had just put his wife and two daughters on the plane.

The families of five of the Americans on the flight arrived yesterday at the Ramada Plaza Hotel, less than a mile from the airport. Scores more are expected today. The Port Authority, which runs the airport, has established a counselling centre at the hotel, also the venue of a similar exercise in 1996 when TWA

Flight 800 blew up near Long Island. A large cordon of burly policemen, courteous but very firm, kept the media away from the mourners, who were huddled inside the hotel with counsellors, chaplains and rabbis.

Rudolph Giuliani, New York's Mayor, revealed that the brother of a friend of his had been on the flight. Without disclosing the friend's name, he said: "He's very distraught, obviously." He promised that no effort would be spared to help the relatives.

Yesterday Swissair announced that it would provide transport to any relatives who wished to travel to Peggy's Cove, where the plane crashed.

Rabbi Edgar Gluck, a counsellor employed by the Port Authority, said: "Some relatives are in a state of shock, real shock. Others are anxiously running to a phone to call the next of kin. There's obviously a lot of denial and a lot of hope... they've found only 36 bodies, so people think that others may have survived."

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Swissair and plane had reputations to be envied

BY ARTHUR LEATHLEY, AVIATION CORRESPONDENT, AND JOANNA BALE

THE aircraft and airline involved in yesterday's crash each had impressive safety records before the Nova Scotia disaster.

Swissair, the privately-owned airline based in Zurich, has prided itself on its record that dates back almost 20 years without a fatal accident. The MD11 has not had a single fatality since entering service in 1990.

The last fatal incident on a Swissair aircraft involved a DC8 that overshot the runway at Athens airport on landing, killing 14 people. In February 1970, a Swissair Coronado crashed shortly after take-off from Zurich, killing 47, after a bomb was planted on it by the People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

In September 1963, a Swissair Caravelle caught fire after take-off from Zurich and crashed, killing 80 people, including some on the ground.

In recent years the airline has traded heavily on its safety record and high quality service. In 1997, Swissair had one of the biggest increases in passenger numbers, up 22 per cent to 10.3 million.

The airline, which flies to 184 destinations worldwide, was one of the biggest operators of the MD11, with 16 of its 62-strong fleet made by the US manufacturer McDonnell Douglas.

Swissair had a further four MD11s on order, although it is thought to have been planning to sell some of its existing aircraft, in keeping with its reputation for a high turnover of aircraft.

McDonnell Douglas, which was taken over by Boeing last

and brought it into operation four years later.

The Swissair aircraft was delivered to the company in 1991 and had flown 35,000 hours, making it relatively young in airline terms. As a long-haul aircraft, it would typically be used for 15 hours a day and had flown from Geneva to New York on the day of the crash.

The MD11 is a three-engine, wide-bodied jet that seats 298 passengers, and is powered by Pratt & Whitney engines. "It's a very well thought of aircraft," said Kieran Daly, of Air Transport Intelligence. "Both the aircraft and the airline have a very good safety record in the industry."

American National Transportation Safety Board

SAFETY RECORD

records show that since the model was put into service there have been 15 incidents in which the tails of MD11s struck the ground on landing, damaging the exterior of the planes.

Before the Swissair crash, the most serious accident involving an MD11 occurred in 1997, when a Federal Express cargo MD11 crashed into the runway and burnt at Newark International Airport. The jet had earlier been seriously damaged when it descended too quickly and its tail struck the runway during a hard landing in Anchorage, Alaska, in 1994.

The tail strikes prompted the National Transportation Safety Board to issue recom-

and crew of the doomed MD11 appeared to have had very little warning that they were about to crash into the sea.

In a controlled landing on water, the doors would have been turned to automatic to allow the emergency escape chutes to be deployed, but this does not appear to have happened. Also, Canadian authorities said that not all the bodies had lifejackets on, which suggests they had little warning of the impending crash.

At the first sign of an emergency, a pilot will radio to the nearest air traffic control to alert them that he wants to make an emergency landing. Canadian officials said the first indication of an emergency came less than ten minutes before the plane disappeared from radar. The pilot told controllers his cockpit was filled with smoke. He asked to land at Boston, but was told he was closer to Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Usually in an emergency, the pilot will call a senior crew member into the cockpit, using a recognised phrase that does not alarm passengers. Each crew member will realise that there is a problem and will await a briefing from the senior crew member. "The captain will then make a safety announcement to passengers."

It is known that the stricken aircraft dumped several tonnes of fuel over St Margarets Bay before crashing nearby. The plane did not explode on impact. Much of it was in small fragments, the size of jigsaw pieces.

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Gel-like in consistency, this is light enough not to leave a build-up but must be used sparingly. Also contains a sunscreen, and can double as hair protector against sun, sea and chlorine. Trevor Sorbie (01572-375 435) 8/10
- LAMINATES DROPS, £21.50**
Fulfills its claim to be the original surface polisher. Leaves hair feeling end-looking silky and conditioned without any residue or greasiness. The glass bottle could be impractical. Sebastian (0345-125 545) 8/10
- EXPERIENCE LIQUID HAIR, £7.95**
Heated styling tools actually activate this spray which repairs dry and damaged hair and improves condition significantly without leaving a heavy or oily residue. Wellie, available at selected chemists nationwide 10/10 DB

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COMPILED BY DEBORAH BRETT

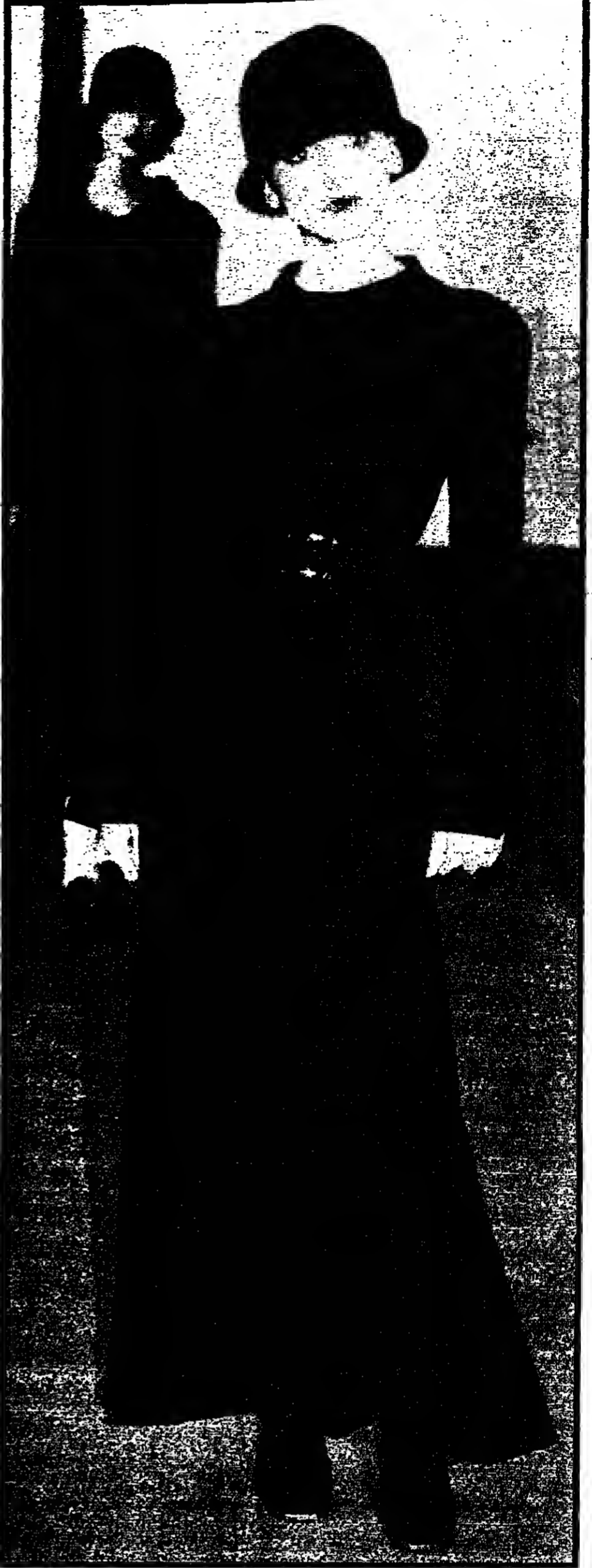
Working out a capsule winter wardrobe

I love almost everything about the French — their clothes, their food, their terrifying, peremptory manners. But I do think they are very hard on their poor schoolchildren. From practically the first day of the summer holidays, the shop windows on every high street are filled with displays celebrating *la rentrée* — autumn leaves and clusters of cobnuts and blackberries and bright-eyed squirrels gambolling among piles of gymslips and satchels. Wherever you look, there is a reminder that the holidays will soon be over.

Well, now the *rentrée* really is here and having spent the past week sewing on several gross of Cash's name tapes, I am finally at liberty to contemplate my own post-holiday wardrobe. With no prospect of an Indian summer in sight, the weather is definitely more suited to hairy tweeds than filmy chiffons, and as I force my reluctant child into his grey-flannel school trousers and shiny new lace-ups, it occurs to me that I haven't a thing to wear.

Actually, grey flannel and black lace-ups might be quite a good place to begin. Every autumn I tell myself that henceforth I am going to live a virtuous and co-ordinated life, exchanging my regrettable magpie tendencies for a capsule collection of two skirts, two pairs of trousers, a handful of cashmere sweaters and a jacket that will go with everything.

In fact, I know that the only way I'll ever achieve this kind of pared-down wardrobe is if the house burns down, leaving me with nothing but my nightie. However, suspending disbelief for a moment (and drawing a veil over the black gittery crochet skirt I picked up for next to nothing in the Warehouse sale, not to mention the only slightly moth-eaten Donegal tweed suit and hand-knitted jumper that somehow attached themselves to me when I dropped into my local charity shop), let us consider what I might choose if I were looking for the basis of a small but versatile working wardrobe that was inexpensive and neither



Headlines have dropped for autumn and winter with Chanel's maxi skirt back in vogue

HOT TIP

Julia Kwan has an insider's knowledge of Chinese home remedies which makes her Wu SkinCare products more than just another Zen-like gimmick. They all contain active ingredients from the Far East, such as crushed pearl, ginseng and royal jelly. One of the best is her Collina, China root and Chinese honeysuckle mask (£19.95), a caramel-coloured cream which draws out inflammation, reduces redness and helps to sink spots before they've even surfaced. Available at Liberty, 210-220 Regent Street W1. (0171-734 1234) DB

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Sooner or later, it will be Prescott

Mary Ann Sieghart discovers our political future in Australia

I have seen the future, and it is John Prescott. I have seen the past, and it is John Howard. After spending six weeks in Australia, I feel as if I have been time-travelling. And it is not just the jet lag that has given me a sense of the world turned upside down.

First, the past. I arrived in Sydney to discover a Tory Prime Minister called John, presiding over a divided governing party, with all the style and charisma of an Austin Allegro. He used to be called Honest John until he broke his election promises. Now he is derided, for his inability to inspire and his weak leadership. He has just called a general election, and his main commitment is a reform of the tax system designed in part to encourage working women back to the kitchen. Sounds familiar? Even the mid-1990s British *anomie* has infected Australia. John Howard's failings have induced nationwide cynicism and depression.

But there is one big difference. Last year in Britain, there was at least some excitement about the prospect of change. Tony Blair offered novelty, modernity and freshness. Yet the Australian Labor leader, Kim Beazley, resembles Mr Prescott more than Mr Blair. He panders to old Labour. He is bluff, likeable and intelligent, but impelled by the need to win back core supporters. Mr Beazley spent four hours at Chequers with Mr Blair last year, but seems reluctant to embark upon any "third way".

Australia has already had its Blair backlash

If this is our future, it is because Australia has already had its Blair and is now suffering the backlash. From 1983 to 1996, Labor was in power there and, under Bob Hawke and Paul Keating, the party showed an astonishing energy for free-market reform. Mr Keating was seen by many as bold and visionary. He sought to define a new identity for Australia, based on sloughing off the monarchist past and forging stronger links with Asia. But he grew arrogant and remote, and eventually went down to a landslide defeat.

What sealed Mr Keating's demise was that solid, working-class Labor supporters abandoned the party to vote for Mr Howard's conservative Liberal/National coalition. These "batters", as they are known, are now the focus of an undignified auction of tax bribes by both parties.

In an attempt to win them back, Mr Beazley has adopted Luddite policies. He opposes the privatisation of Telstra. Australia's BT, even though Labor pioneered the sell-off of state assets. And he opposes the introduction of VAT, known as GST, even though tax reform is vital.

Labor's own tax package, launched last week, is a disgraceful brew of political opportunism and class envy. Mr Beazley is offering "batters" income tax cuts without the pain of Mr Howard's GST. In a transparent stunt, he proposes

big tax increases on yuppies' four-wheel-drive cars, Learjets and caviare. The last will raise for the Treasury the opulent sum of £30,000 a year.

Meanwhile, both parties are paralysed by One Nation, the racist and deeply conservative party led by Pauline Hanson. They fear alienating her supporters because (electoral reformers take note) they may have to rely on One Nation votes under Australia's system of preferential voting. This is the system many now want for Britain.

Ms Hanson's success was due in part to Labor's lurch to the Right under Hawke and Keating. When both main parties agreed on privatisation, welfare reform, deregulation, multiculturalism and globalisation, there was nowhere for disgruntled voters, hurt by reform, to go. Consensus between Labor and the Coalition created an opening for Ms Hanson.

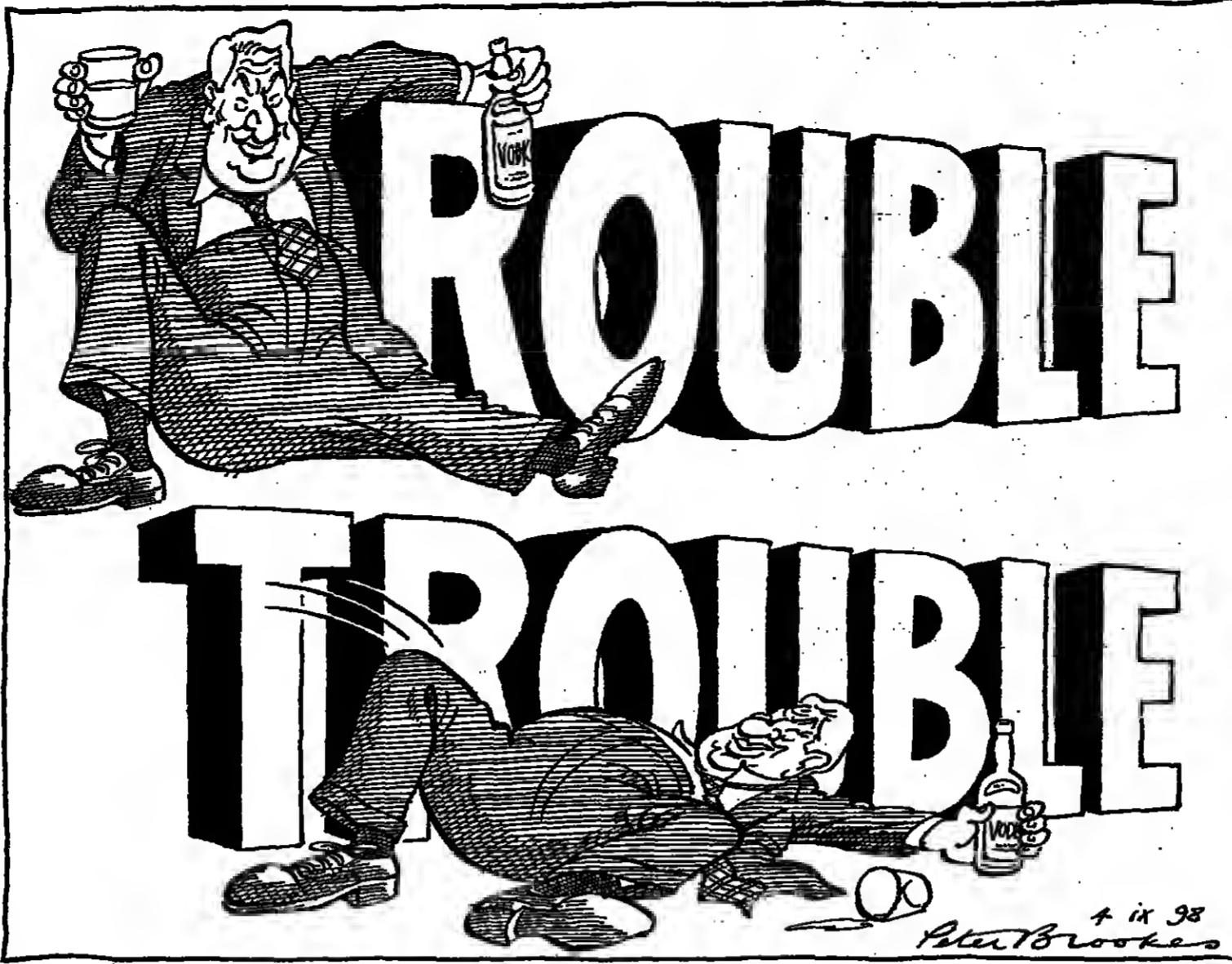
In Britain, the first-past-the-post system makes the rise of a One-Nation-style party unlikely. But electoral reform could allow it to happen, particularly with the policy convergence between Labour and the Conservatives. Even under the existing voting system, Mr Blair should beware of assuming that he can take the party's core support for granted. The Australian lesson is that the Tories, like John Howard's party, could reinvent themselves as consolidators after years of bruising Blairite reform, and woo away traditional Labour voters.

Australia's experience suggests that this is most likely to happen if the Prime Minister becomes arrogant and aloof. Reforms have to be explained, the public needs to be converted. But Prime Ministers can lose touch without realising it. Margaret Thatcher, who started knowing the price of a loaf of bread, ended by thinking that her house in Dulwich was convenient for the Commons because she and her police escort were used to whistling through red lights.

None of this is to say that Mr Blair should shirk reform. It was a reform agenda, after all, that won four elections for Labor in Australia, and the lack of it that is now holding Mr Beazley back. Mr Blair has to sort out welfare: he is right to contemplate privatisation. He should then turn his attention to education. But it must be handled with immense care, and explained in the context of Labour's core values.

For Mr Blair personally to survive, he must somehow keep his feet on the ground. The lure of international stardom, the confidence boosts of a second or a third term, all conspire to propel a Prime Minister into orbit.

If Mr Blair succumbs, he will eventually go the way of Mr Keating. And whoever replaces him will not be Gordon Brown or Stephen Byers, but a second-generation, old-Labor-loving, John Prescott.



Next, the bad news

24-hour rolling bulletins will be no more than news as wallpaper

Among the perils of walking alone and unprotected in Central London now that the crime rate is falling, is a novel kind of assault. Anywhere in SW1 with a newsy backdrop, but especially around Westminster's College Green, one is liable to be ambushed by the new media desperados: sound and camera crews working for one of the latest 24-hour "rolling news" programmes and on the hunt for comment, commentary, reportage, wisecracking, anything to fill the yawning spaces between regular news bulletins, and honour the pledge (as the BBC puts it):

... to give you the whole picture of the whole country the whole time... Events can be followed as they unfold... There'll be time, the whole time, to tell the full stories. With more voices and views from more places and faces.

And boy do they need another view from another face. These people are young and hungry. They may be on the BBC, which launched its News 24 service at the end of last year, or from Sky News; or from the originals at this game, CNN. No matter: what they want is always the same. Footage, footage, footage — and fast.

They want it sharp and they want it fresh. It doesn't have to be very clever, it doesn't have to be original and it doesn't have to be challenging. It certainly need not be profound and it had better not be complicated. Your best bet as a wannabe pundit is to acquire the habit of dividing up what pass for your thoughts (for you are by definition unlikely to have had much time to think them) into bite-sized chunks 15-30 seconds long. "Free-standing": You should then deliver a string of these like sausages so that they can be cut and used as necessary, in any order: a single sausage for the bulletins, and half a dozen or so in clumps for the longer "analysis" and "commentary" slots between.

Your contented 24-hour-rolling-news-service producer has yards of these sausages, all fresh and of assorted types, hanging from the cutting-room ceiling. Your successful 24-hour-rolling-news-service reporter has just rung in on the mobile phone and is heading back with yards more. Your thrusting 24-hour-rolling-news-service presenter is:

... the cream of the crop: young and experienced journalists who are

the news stars of the future". Thus are 24-hour-rolling-news-service careers made: with fresh sausages thwacked down onto the slab by the young news stars of the future. The quality of the sausages is a secondary consideration, as long as each is of the requisite length. Everyone's in a hurry. That is the explicit boast: "The Now-O'Clock News... on-the-spot live coverage from 42 BBC operations overseas... fast-response broadcasting vehicles and satellite trucks... instant reports from the remotest places on earth. You'll be receiving the news as soon as we do. You'll be following events as they unfold instead of running to catch up."

Rising stars within such programme-making are unlikely to find their careers much impeded by the complaint that the material they offered added little to the viewer's understanding of the issue "as it unfolded". But no reporter who comes back empty-handed because there was nothing useful to be said yet will not survive long in the job. "Yes? What do you mean 'yet'? We need a commentary now." This, after all, is the Now O'Clock News.

"Whenever anything happens, we will be there first." Never mind the quality, just feel the immediacy.

I, who have something to gain from it, being actually rather good at making flip comments fast and succinctly, am unsettled by all this rolling news business, on two accounts. How much does it add? And how much potential demand is there for this kind of thing?

Apologists offer two responses: hard news, they point out, may sometimes amount to more than can be fitted into a scheduled slot; and the analysis should not have to wait for a *Panorama* or *Newsnight*.

The child's question: "Why does the news always take half an hour, daddy?" cuts both ways. There may be more than we have space for — but there may also be less. Are regular

news bulletins really often bursting at the seams? (It is at least as common to encounter padding. Those like me who inhabit the fringes of the news business know how much of a producer's time is spent desperately trying to fill space.)

Most of the time there will be no big story breaking: yet to grab our attention a rolling news programme will want to sound as though such stories were breaking all the time. It is in the professional interest of those offering such a service to impart a note of urgent and concerned insistence to everything they relate, however repetitive or trivial. The illusion peddled by the hurried and excited tone which is the keynote of rolling news is that this is news for busy people. The reality is that it will be news-as-wallpaper, news as leisure. Everything about rolling news needs to be in a hurry except the analyst? Well,

plainly if good analysis can be provided fast, then fine. But good analysis seldom can be. It requires quiet thought and new work. Until the dust has settled some of the most useful thoughts have simply not been thought.

"Instant" reaction, as the story "breaks", is often the least interesting thing about it: a very perishable commodity. Rolling news services gave us hourly reports on the last big Bosnian war but in his memoirs Martin Bell suggests that reporters obliged to cover the story in this way dared not stray far from their own broadcasting unit.

Far from deepening its news coverage, a channel trying to provide breathless, 24-hour rolling coverage may cheapen it: wallfing endlessly and dragging in witnesses to mouth at their idiotic questions like "what's happening?" and "what may happen next?" — at the cost of the sort of roaming, speculative fishing-expeditions for which more traditional coverage has time. War reporting (where the demand for immediacy is intense) so often turns out in retrospect to have

been misleading. If British politics were reported in hushed voice by on-the-spot reporters as the "stories" "broke" then viewers would not only fail to get the picture any quicker, they would never get it at all.

It is open to the missionaries for rolling reporting to protest that such dangers are apparent and avoidable, by an emphasis on reflection, depth and detail. But in a broadcasting culture where the keynote is immediacy, thought will always be relegated. Already I sense that the young broadcasting professionals commending themselves to the emerging dispensation at the BBC are making portability their dominant skill.

Travel fast and light if you want to get on. The people who stay in one place, who learn the language or master the figures, the people who understand the news, are discovering that their role in this new world will be as tools, not as craftsmen.

All these costs — and costs they are — might be bearable if it could be demonstrated that there really did exist a huge potential public demand for continuous 24-hour broadcast rolling news. There never can be, and the reason is technical. Reading, you can scan or skip. Watching a video you can fast-forward or back. On the Internet you can select. But with broadcast news neither selection, compression nor acceleration is an option for the consumer. Bound to a rolling wheel, he must follow the whole thing all through, at its own pace.

This is like being forced to read an entire newspaper, every word, from beginning to end, in the hope of coming from time to time upon some words among them about something of interest to you.

Twenty-four-hour-rolling-news will move from cutting-edge to obsolete blunderbuss — without passing through anything in between. If you suspend in the airwaves what is really a repeating newspaper, then, among a vast population, there will always be a few hundred thousand ready to stare up in case something should catch their eye, but the concept is massively inefficient. It will commend itself in times of war, and to bored people in international hotels, or stuck in hospital beds.

News as entertainment; news for the idle, not the busy.

Matthew Parris

The land that forgot itself

Roger Scruton goes in quest of a lost England

Who are the English? Like many once imperial peoples, the English do not know. Hardly a week goes by without some new literary meditation on the unsolved question of our identity. Adam Thorpe, in *Pieces of Light*, offers the rural idyll of Ulverton, while in *England, England*, the witty Julian Barnes seeks to persuade us that all our idylls are bogus.

"England is an Empire, entire of itself" said Henry VIII. But what did he mean by "Empire"? England was later to become a Union, then the British Empire, then the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and finally, in our day, as the Celtic extremities one by one identified themselves in opposition to the people to the South and East of them, plain England once again, but decidedly not an empire.

This rediscovered England wanders wraith-like above the land which bears its name. Its language is no longer a national possession, but a worldwide *lingua franca*, a jargon that hardly anyone uses well — since the distinction between use and abuse has been abolished. Its literature, the greatest in the history of the world, is known only to a few, and most of them Americans.

Its history is taught with tongue in cheek and soon forgotten, and its unique national church has lost its ancient identity, its congregation and its doctrine. Its political institutions — the envy and inspiration of so many Enlightenment thinkers — have begun to unravel, and the common law, its greatest and least understood possession, is now muddled and mutilated by decrees from Europe.

While Britannia ruled the waves it was not necessary to ask whether Britannia was also England. Now there are Scottish nationalists, Welsh nationalists, Irish nationalists, and last week even Patagonian nationalists within our legal borders. But no English nationalists. Some people regret this. Nationhood tells people that their being together in a place and a time is right and good. That is why every European country harbours a core of national sentiment. Only the English seem different in this. We are patriotic, but not nationalistic. We can express loyalty to our country and our monarch, but not to our "nation". English people, asked what attaches them to their country, refer only to the landscape, usually in some Arcadian version that bears no relation to the light-polluted suburbs where they live. We know that they are different; but whenever we try to define our difference, we become cagey and anecdotal. Here is George Orwell, in one of his many attempts: "... there is something distinctive and recognisable in English civilisation. It is a culture as individual as that of Spain. It is somehow bound up with solid breakfasts and gloomy Sundays, smoky towns and winding roads, green fields and red pillar-boxes. It has a flavour of its own."

Imagine a French writer who identified France as a flavour? Do you fight wars for a flavour? But there is another message concealed in Orwell's words. England, he implies, is a civilisation. And that is how our country has been seen by those writers who have most effectively praised it: by Joseph Conrad and Henry James, by Rudyard Kipling and T. S. Eliot. And maybe it is significant that, of those four great patriots, only Kipling was an Englishman by birth, and even he was born in India. Englishness is pictured by Conrad as an intensely inner, private thing. His merchant-seaman heroes act in accordance with an inviolable metonymy of home. They radiate decency and their intrepid gentleness immediately distinguishes them from the adventurers and savages who bark and grovel at their heels.

Many of the masters in my grammar school had returned from administrative posts in the colonies; just such a mystical image of England had given zest to their wanderings. They conveyed this image to their pupils. We rebelled against it, but we absorbed it nevertheless. I suppose we were the last generation to be taught to believe in England, the last to inherit what is essentially — like the *dulce et decorum* of Horace — an imperial ideal. This week the British Consul in Ibiza resigned, unable to bear any longer the humiliation of representing a barbarian race. Drunkenness, swearing, obscenity and belligerence characterise the English visitors, whose inarticulate carousing bears witness to their remoteness from all that my teachers admired. Back home in Bristol, 87-year-old Frank Eddolls finally closed the corner-shop which he had kept open for 64 years, having been robbed for the 235th time. Mr Eddolls is no stranger to the English idea. "Even at the height of the Blitz," he remarked, "people would not dream of descending to such violence and anarchy. We had respect for each other and treated each other with dignity." Such examples cast a bleak light on the question of English identity: for if England is the name of a civilisation, it could well be that there is no longer any such thing.

Trust Tommy

THE National Trust wants to be hip. It is negotiating with Tommy Hilfiger, the American designer, to come up with new designs for the warden's who patrol its outdoor attractions, such as Stonehenge. If the makeover proves popular, the trust's brigade of blue-rinse volunteers could follow suit and find their twinsted and pearls replaced with rather more jazzy outfits.

Hilfiger is not the first name which springs to mind as an outfit for the guardians of British heritage. The designer makes £450 million a year by selling hip-hop clothes worn by youths in America's ghettos to wealthy thirtysomethings, employing rappers such as Snoop Doggy Dog and Coolio to promote his label. He also kitted out the Rolling Stones for their world tour. "We want our wardens to wear more light-hearted dress," says my friend at the trust. "We want people to find our staff more approachable."

But it might encounter opposition from stalwarts. "High fashion is not appropriate," says Jan Wallwork-Wright, who looks after Batsford, the trust's Jacobean house in Sussex, where Rudyard Kipling lived. "We show the property just as Kipling left it in the Thirties. The only uniforms we use are the ones the girls wear in the tea-room." On my next visit to buy jam at a trust property, I fully expect to be greeted by: "Yo man, whars up?"

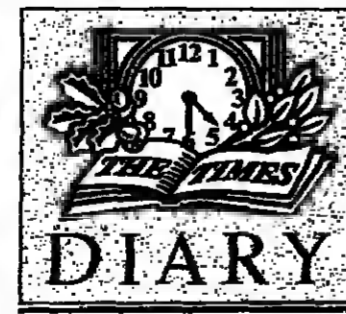
only the rest of the party could get along with each other so splendidly, perhaps Thatcher's prediction might come to naught.

● JANET LEIGH (pictured below), whose 15 minutes of fame consists entirely of being stabbed in a shower in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*, says: "I certainly don't think I did the motel industry any good."

● RESIDENTS of Belgravia are being urged to call 999 if they catch sight of a Kenneth Williams look-alike who cons his way into homes. Police say the man is distinguished by his "flared nostrils".

● BECOMING a working peer has been a humbling experience for Lord Briggs: "I don't have a desk in the Lords, let alone an office or a secretary. I am not even important enough to be given a pager. I am having to make do with an old chair in the library."

● JULIA SOMERVILLE (pictured above) the News at Ten presenter, admits she has not been keeping up with the news: "The first I heard about the proposed changes to the programme's scheduling was when I saw the headlines in the paper."



Sweet course

IS Baroness Thatcher attempting a rapprochement with William Hague after her cutting comments in *Saga* magazine last week? Dropping by the Ritz the other night, I noticed Margaret and Denis dining with the Conservative leader and Fionn, his wife. Even though Thatcher was quoted suggesting that Hague would be unable to turn the party's fortunes around by the next election, the foursome were deep in conversation throughout the evening and displayed no signs of tension. If

Nail-biter

NOT for Martin Amis the squalid bedsits that provide the settings for his fiction. The novelist invited the *RIBA Journal*, an aesthetic architectural magazine, to inspect the £115,000-worth of home improve-



ments he has lavished upon the 19th-century house near Regent's Park which he shares with Isabel Fonseca, his wife. The verdict? "Light, frighteningly stylish and very, very clean. Much of the money went on his and her offices. Amis has an air-conditioned study in the loft; Fonseca, also a scribbler, a garden studio. While it is leagues away from the digs in which Charles Highway dwells in *The Rachel Papers*, chez Amis chimes with what the author has written about the rewards of literary success: "The home improvement community, the knighted architect, the overalld stiff with a mouthful of nails."

who are visiting Britain later this year. They will no doubt be bemused when they click that the aristocrat's ancestor, the 3rd earl, was the general who conquered and looted Havana in 1762.

Hello again

THE Earl of Albemarle is helping to further diplomatic relations between Britain and Cuba, despite his forefather's exploits. He has been roped in by the Cuban Ambassador to host a party in London for some Communists from Havana



Edward Welsh



EDWARD WELSH



SMOKE SIGNALS

Trimble should explore Sinn Fein's intentions

Bill Clinton is probably more influential in Northern Ireland than in North Carolina at the moment. So Tony Blair and David Trimble have every reason to be satisfied with the President's visit to Belfast and Omagh yesterday. Mr Clinton handled himself with considerable dignity and struck the right balance for the occasion. His impending arrival was doubtless the catalyst for Gerry Adams' statement on Tuesday — since reinforced in characteristically forceful terms to his republican opponents — and for the appointment of Martin McGuinness to liaise with the disarmament commission. The President's unambiguous call for full decommissioning and an end to punishment beatings will have been warmly welcomed by Ulster democrats of all stripes.

Mr Trimble now has to decide how best to deal with Mr Adams and Mr McGuinness. In the aftermath of the Omagh bombing Northern Ireland's First Minister again urged republicans to declare an absolute end to the conflict and offer a tangible commitment to decommissioning. It would be churlish to deny that Sinn Fein's actions this week do not represent some movement on its behalf, nor would it be constructive to insist upon the particular phrase "no more war" if alternative words are offered that are functionally indistinguishable from that term. The Adams declaration that Sinn Fein now sees violence as a "thing of the past, over, done with, gone" is not quite watertight, but it does move Sinn Fein much closer to the constitutional mainstream.

The difficulty is that Sinn Fein and the IRA are sending out different messages. The leadership of the IRA proper has chosen to resist language of the sort that Mr Adams has offered this week and remains essentially dismissive of decommissioning. It has offered some limited co-operation on matters

such as the identification of the "disappeared" which have public relations appeal but are costless in military terms. The IRA's willingness to confront members of the Real IRA and Continuity IRA face to face probably reflects a determination to maintain its monopoly over the republican movement more than devotion to the Good Friday agreement.

Mr Adams would argue that all these distinctions are more a matter of internal diplomacy than external substance. He would contend that Sinn Fein clearly embodies the majority position among the paramilitaries. The wider IRA membership, however, contains a sizeable section which offers, at best, cautious support of the peace strategy. The objections of this group will not be overcome until the Northern Ireland Assembly starts to deliver concrete change for the nationalist minority. If the IRA itself were now to embrace the Ulster settlement in the same fashion as Sinn Fein, there would be widespread defections to fringe organisations. That split, Mr Adams would assert, could hardly be in Ulster's interests.

There is obviously some truth in the Adams analysis. It is equally true that Mr Trimble cannot permit Sinn Fein to enter the Northern Ireland executive on its own terms as a confidence-building gesture towards sceptical members of the IRA. The process of decommissioning must be initiated before either Mr Adams or Mr McGuinness can be permitted a position of power. It would now be legitimate for Mr Trimble to engage Sinn Fein directly and discuss how decommissioning might be achieved. This is probably the best means of testing the scope and sincerity of Republican intentions. It would, inevitably, be a controversial meeting. There is enough evidence from this week's activities to suggest that it is worth the risk.

EXIT, PURSUED

Mahathir chases Malaysia's top moderniser off stage

Malaysia's dramatic retreat behind the barrier of currency controls has been overshadowed by a greater political drama, the abrupt sacking of Anwar Ibrahim, the Deputy Prime Minister, Finance Minister and putative heir, amid what seem to be preparations for his arrest on fantastic charges ranging from sexual deviation to espionage. In politics as in economics, the peppery Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Malaysia's Prime Minister since 1981, has no scruples about throwing out the baby with the bathwater.

Of these two developments, the return to currency controls would, under the right conditions, be the less shocking. Certainly it is a step back from free markets, but hardly a step back to the Stone Age. They existed until recently in much of Western Europe, and even America had them in the 1960s. Some controls, for example on short-term capital movements, can temporarily steady badly exposed economies. One lesson of Asia's economic turmoil is that if countries are to prosper in free capital markets, they need to have more robust budgetary controls, inflation targets and financial regulation than many, including Malaysia, turned out to have. And when even Hong Kong, the tightest ship in Asia, decides that tougher restrictions on short selling are needed to stop hedge fund speculators manipulating its market for instant profits, it is hardly surprising that unseaworthy Malaysia should have drawn up the gangplank.

But currency controls have uses only as part of a strategy to address the reasons for lost confidence and capital flight. As a substitute for reform, they are worse than useless. Dr Mahathir, whose first reaction to Asian instability last year was to blame a "Jewish conspiracy" and to boast that Malaysia had no need of reforms, has never liked the austerity policies pursued by Mr Anwar. Still less has he cared for the inter-

national plaudits showered on his deputy. The fall of Suharto made Dr Mahathir, who is now the last of the Asian "old guard", thoroughly nervous; and Mr Anwar's forthright speeches and articles about the need for Asians to make changes "before it is too late", coupled with his rash remarks about "opportunistic politicians who fan the flames of jingoism", were not calculated to ease the head that wore the political crown.

Since last June's conference of the ruling party, Dr Mahathir has fought back by means fair and foul. He cowed an influential protégé of Mr Anwar, who dared to complain of cronyism and nepotism. He then brought an old friend into his Cabinet to effect an economic U-turn that raised spending, cut interest rates and pumped liquidity into a rotted banking system whose bad debts may be a third of total assets. Sidelined, Mr Anwar publicly took the new line as the economy went into a nosedive. By now he was on the defensive. Mysteriously, a book titled *50 Reasons Why Anwar Cannot Be Prime Minister*, against which a judge had granted Mr Anwar an injunction calling it "a poison pen letter in book form", surfaced in every party conference folder. In Malaysia, such surprises are no accident.

Mr Anwar is suing the book's author, who has also been charged with "spreading false rumours"; but the police are investigating every allegation anyway. With the mere hint of consort with prostitutes enough to dent Mr Anwar's image as a pious Muslim, the order of the boot was just a matter of time. Last night, he lost his party leadership position too. For Malaysia, all this is disastrous. Dr Mahathir could have given no plainer notice that Malaysia's troubles have barely begun than to have coupled extreme currency controls with the brutal ousting of the most prominent political moderniser in his administration.

FATED TO BE THIRD

Decent Lib Dem ideas are ripe for snatching by Labour

If it is hard enough for the Conservatives to be noticed in this era of Blairite ascendancy, what hope for the Liberal Democrats? Yesterday the party launched the first draft of a mid-term manifesto, at least partly in an effort to keep itself in the public eye. Like many such Lib Dem documents, this is an offering of a few small nuggets packaged carefully in woolly thought.

Much of the programme consists of old views in new wrappings. For decades, the Liberals have (understandably) campaigned for constitutional reform and, in particular, for proportional representation. As is to be expected from a party that is never likely to wield power, many of its proposals are sensible but undeliverable, such as the reduction in the number of MPs to 500.

Others represent partisanship dressed up as piety, one of the less engaging characteristics of the Lib Dems. For instance, the document argues that "power is ultimately the property of the people, not the State, and powers exercised by government are powers granted to it for a reason, rather than held by right. That is why we are by it as of right. That is why we are committed to proportional representation." This self-interested *non sequitur* masquerading as attractive altruism is typical of much of the manifesto.

This document is, inevitably, shaped by the Lib Dems' own political strengths and weaknesses. The party wants more power for Parliament, the Lords and the select com-

mittees over the executive. All these may be justified on their own account. But it cannot be complete coincidence that Liberals are better represented on back benches, committees and the Lords than in government.

In the education section, the large representation of teachers in the party is reflected in bone-headed proposals to allow schools to evaluate themselves as an "important part" of an Ofsted inspection. Next, pupils will be allowed to mark their own exam papers. The Lib Dems also propose to reverse the "Greenwich judgment", which has allowed thousands of parents to send their children to schools outside their boroughs. The party's opposition to this liberating measure stems from its base in local government.

Yet there is evidence of fresh thinking too. The party wants local education authorities only to "commission" schools, not to run them. In a proposal similar to Labour's education action zones, the Lib Dems suggest the establishment of not-for-profit neighbourhood schools trusts, which would take over individual schools or groups of them. And their attempt to simplify the tax system and take the lowest earners out of the tax net by abolishing reliefs and allowances is commendable. Tony Blair, however, is a consummate and sharp-sighted magpie. Any nuggets here that are shiny enough to steal will almost certainly find themselves plucked away for Labour's use.

Safety concerns on air traffic control

From Mr James Anderson

Sir, The "bureaucratic indifference and technical incompetence" referred to in your leading article (September 2) on air traffic jams is more severe than you indicate.

Following the shooting down by the Soviet Union of an off-course Korean airliner in 1981, the US Federal Aviation Administration concluded that global positioning system (GPS) satellites offered the best solution for future air traffic control. By using GPS signals, airlines can "talk" to each other and maintain safe flight without the need for the present level of regulation on airways or for continuous air traffic control.

A number of ground stations are needed to achieve the accuracy and reliability required by airlines. Accordingly the FAA, as part of its "free flight" programme, has built and equipped some 25 "wide area augmentation stations" covering the whole of North America and extending to a station on Iceland. These stations are planned to go live next summer. I understand that the Japanese have decided to do likewise, and the Far East will be similarly equipped about a year later.

Britain's Civil Aviation Authority appears reluctant to release its plans for UK airspace and for the conduct of UK-registered airliners worldwide. In the absence of a published plan, such as the FAA's, there is a suspicion that the CAA does not have a plan at all, even though the inevitability of the GPS solution is by now self-evident.

One consequence is that at least part of the new £350 million replacement for the air traffic control centre at Swanwick in Hampshire is obsolete before it even opens.

Yours faithfully,
JAMES ANDERSON
(Private pilot),
Blue Slates Farm,
Leyland Lane, Ulms Walton,
Leyland, Lancashire PR5 3LB.
September 2.

From the Technical Director of the Guild of Air Traffic Controllers

Sir, Your leading article underestimates the problem of overloading.

An overload in an air traffic control sector is adrenalin-producing and can be frightening to a controller. It can result from very short-notice events, including technical problems with aircraft or ground equipment or weather conditions requiring thunderstorm avoidance, and once the holding stacks are full space has to be found for the aircraft to await onward clearance: the system determines the pace, not the controller. That is why we believe that the continued delay in commissioning the new ATC centre at Swanwick has for too long been dismissed by some authorities as being not safety-significant.

Your statement that "for as long as most people can remember, the present centre... has been overcrowded, undermanned and overwhelmed" is an exaggeration. If that were indeed the case, the last 30 years would have seen disastrous events. In fact, the professionalism of the controllers has so far prevented the system from being overwhelmed.

The limit has now been reached. That is the cause of the alarm and despondency felt by many of our members. Commercial pressures of timekeeping must be held secondary to the prime objective of safety.

Yours etc,
P. J. HARRISON,
Technical Director,
Guild of Air Traffic
Control Officers,
24 The Greenwood,
Guildford, Surrey GU1 2ND.
September 2.

Smokers are fuming

From Mr Vernon Winterbottom

Sir, Your story about the employee sacked for lighting up in his car (August 28) highlights the absurd restrictions that are now being placed on smokers.

We more than pay our way as employees and consumers, and the vast majority of us respect the needs of non-smokers.

Britain's smoker-bosses, and companies with fair workplace smoking policies, should stand up and be counted, and speak out against extremism of this type.

Yours sincerely,
VERNON WINTERBOTTOM,
65 Mount Drive,
Urraston, Manchester M41 9PZ.
August 28.

Essex at Cambridge

From Mrs Jennifer Cowell

Sir, Grace Bradberry's article ("Baiting an Essex girl", August 27; see also report, later editions, August 26) reminded me of my daughter's experience at her Cambridge interview several years ago.

Her interviewer asked: "Do you know any good Essex girl jokes?" "I know some," she replied, "but I don't repeat them."

She was offered a place.

Yours sincerely,
JENNIFER COWELL,
117 Main Road,
Danbury, Essex CM3 4DL.
bcowell@esxi.com
August 27.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Britain neglects her relics of empire

From Mr Russell Vallance

Sir, I agree with Mr John Crookshank, writing about Gibraltar (letter, September 1), that the designation of great colonial relics as World Heritage Sites should be judged irrespective of whose flag flies over them. However, Britain's own record is less than wholesome with regard to the preservation of our overseas cultural and architectural heritage.

Britain recently showed little sympathy with the desire of the people of Gibraltar to retain the Garrison Library as a public resource, regarding it rather as an MoD asset for disposal.

The Stonecutters Island naval base might have been developed as an historical and tourist site for the people of Hong Kong; instead it was handed over to the People's Liberation Army without demur.

The great fortress and naval dockyard on Bermuda was allowed to crumble and decay for years before it was handed over to the Bermuda Maritime Museum Trust. In fact, I believe this museum project is a classic example of neglect by Britain; hampered in its fundraising by being classed as "British" by international funding agencies, yet not having the same access to public funds as British heritage organisations in the UK.

Having visited many historic sites in the Caribbean and Central America, I find it heartening to see the care and effort being put into restoration and conservation of colonial buildings and fortifications. Sadly, the exception is where the British flag still flies. Historic remains in British territories that I have seen tend to be unkempt, overgrown, neglected and underfunded.

As a positive step towards changing this sorry state of affairs, perhaps the Government might end the current ambivalence and state that National Lottery heritage grants might be made to British projects in colonies and territories.

Perhaps, then, the sight of a British flag flying over old ramparts might

become a source of pride in our care, rather than embarrassment at our neglect.

Yours,
RUSSELL VALLANCE,
6a Bridge Square,
Farnham, Surrey GU9 7QR.
phadre@btinternet.co.uk
September 1.

From the Chairman of Building Conservation International

Sir, For many years this organisation has used Great Britain as a shining example of how to retain architectural heritage for cultural and economic benefits. Now the Foreign Office wants to demolish Government House at Tortola in the British Virgin Islands for a new building (report, "Fight to preserve residence is lost", August 26). Does it not realise the value of tourism as an industry, and of historic architecture as an incentive for travel? Who would want to come to Tortola to see one more "modern" building?

Some years ago, for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, I wrote an article on 13 ways to destroy a listed building. The first method is to declare it structurally unsafe. We had one building in Philadelphia that was so designated by an unscrupulous developer: it took a whole summer to pull it down.

Usually those who say rehabilitation can't be done are those who simply don't know how to do it. With improved education, realistic building codes geared to older technologies and materials, and minimum standards of procedure, rehabilitating pre-1940 properties can become a usual business practice. This type of work can be done on time, on budget and still be sensitive to original design and fabric, if all participants are properly trained.

We urge the Foreign Office to reconsider this unfortunate decision.

Sincerely,
GERSIL N. KAY, Chairman,
Building Conservation International,
1901 Walnut Street, Suite 9b,
Philadelphia, PA 19103.
August 27.

'Lower yields' from transgenic crops

From Mr Mark Griffiths

Sir, Michael Hornsby's report of August 25 on reduced pesticide requirements for Monsanto's genetically modified (GM) herbicide-resistant sugar-beet made interesting reading.

Farmers may be able to make immediate savings in pesticide costs, even though it is already known that the transfer of herbicide resistance to weed species will make this technology impotent sooner or later. However, it would be unwise to judge such crops on one aspect of their performance alone.

Monsanto claims that transgenic crops produce higher yields. However, data from sources other than Monsanto, such as Cyanamid (with whom Monsanto is about to merge) and Canadian seed assessment authorities, indicate that some of Monsanto's herbicide-resistant crops are producing lower yields and profits for farmers than unmodified varieties.

These sources also suggest that some GM soya and oilseed products from Monsanto are producing yield

losses of up to 20 per cent compared to unmodified varieties, despite the crops being herbicide-resistant.

Greenpeace announced last week that farmers in parts of the former Soviet Union growing Monsanto's GM "Naturemark" NewLeaf potatoes have been producing yields at half to one third the expected levels. Farmers in Georgia have been pushed into debt as a result.

The poor agronomic performance of these GM products would seem to indicate that biotechnologists may not have control over the knock-on effects of randomly introducing foreign genetic material into crops. Clearly other aspects of plant functioning are being unexpectedly affected. Let the buyer beware.

Sincerely,
MARK GRIFFITHS
(Environment spokesman,
Natural Law Party),
75 Fairfield Road,
Winchester, Hampshire SO22 6SG.
griffiths@wrtmz.com
September 1.

Runaway balloon

From Mr Noel Falconer

Sir, The Royal Canadian Air Force is teased (report, August 31) for failing to shoot down a weather balloon. Unfairly. It's all but impossible to down a helium balloon.

In the Great War, the Royal Flying Corps found destroying observation balloons so difficult that it equated a victory over one with downing several aircraft — and that was with incendiary bullets and inflammable buoyancy gas.

The problem is that the thin gasbag doesn't slow a cannon shell, or a missile, enough to trigger the fuse and explode it, so it merely punctures the skin neatly, inboard and outboard. And with no pressure differential, a 400m-diameter balloon doesn't deflate quickly through even 100 half-inch holes.

This is more than a curiosity: the survival of the weather balloon indicates that the vulnerability of the airships with which our RN is experimenting may be much less than seems obvious.

Yours faithfully,
NOEL FALCONER,
223 Bramhall Moor Lane,
Hazel Grove, Stockport SK7 5JL.
a202025@infotrade.co.uk
August 31.

Sales pressure

From Mrs Jenifer Hudson

Sir, Our family owns (but does not now use) a bottle of Worcestershire sauce which once belonged to my mother.

It has no sell-by date (letters, September 2; August 25 and 27) but instead states: "Temporary label. This is owing to damage to our factory by enemy action."

Yours faithfully,
JENIFER HUDSON,
Foot Lodge,
Middleton Stoney,
Oxfordshire OX6 8SW.
September 2.

Theological thinking

From the Right Reverend H. H. Davies

Sir, Dr David Gosling's complaint (letter, August 27) of "slick misrepresentation" hardly fits the actual use made of the Bible at the Lambeth Conference. Rather, it seems to have been robust and to the point.

This is analogous to our Lord's and his apostles' use of the Old Testament and represents a prophetic method which has led to phenomenal Anglican Church growth in the developing world.

Here in the West, with few exceptions and after a decade of evangelism, the Anglican Church remains moribund, its message widely inhibited by a sophistry alien to the Judeo-Christian revelation.

Yours sincerely,
HOWELL DAVIES
(Bishop of Karamoja,
Uganda, 1981-87),
3 Gilberts Wood,
Ewyas Harold, Hereford HR2 0JL.
September 1.

The bad news

From Mr Nicholas Spalding

Sir, My pet dislike is those news-readers (letter, August 27) who at the end of a commercial break say "Welcome back". I have not been away, they have.

Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS SPALDING,
16 Offington Park,
Sutton, Dublin 13.
spalding@iol.ie
August 27.

Business letters, page 31

Letters that are intended for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046. e-mail to letters@the-times.co.uk

'Joyless, PC opera' at Glyndebourne

From Miss Patricia A. Haigh

Sir, John Higgins's interview with Anthony Whitworth-Jones on his departure from the directorship at Glyndebourne (Arts, August 26) neatly encapsulated what many opera lovers feel is the great discrepancy between the opera fuvvies controlling productions and the many ocker-buying punters who go to opera to be entertained, not subjected to an exercise in political correctness.

Whitworth-Jones stoutly defends Deborah Warner's unloveable production of *Don Giovanni* and laments the failure to produce a "top-class" *Figaro* during his rule. Yet the majority of visitors to Glyndebourne the *Figaro* which reopened the opera house, with its delectable Renée Fleming, the delightful Alison Hagley and the fine Andreas Schmidt, was as definitive and enjoyable an evening as most operagoers would ever wish for.

The *Don Giovanni*, on the other hand, although fine musically, was as joyless and dull an experience as I have ever experienced, and its transposition from 18th-century Seville to late 20th-century Essex — or wherever — meant that many of the main points of the opera were lost.

When we go to the opera it is to be entertained, not bullied by the likes of Ms Warner or Mr Sellars into what we should be thinking about an opera.

Yours sincerely,
PATRICIA A. HAIGH,
8 Compton Close,
Chichester, West Sussex PO19 4PH.
phphs123@aol.com
August 27.

Leach pottery 'defunct'

From Mrs Jane Schopflin

Sir, Since the death of Janet Leach last year the pottery in St Ives where she and Bernard worked for nearly 50 years has become, in effect, defunct.

I find this a huge shame. I can understand that the family do not wish to see hordes of people grasping through the premises every week, as at Barbara Hepworth's house and studio near by.

But there are surely other options, acceptable both to the family and to us, the Tate Gallery St Ives, which runs the Hepworth house. The Leaches were so central to that magic postwar gathering of artists in St Ives which reshaped how we all looked at forms and colour.

Where the new ideas were forged matters. This pottery matters. I do so hope it can be saved as a place where others can begin to understand how the Leaches brought the skills and inspiration of three continents to together and created something quite new and still very wonderful.

Yours sincerely,
JANE SCHOPFLIN,
71 Chester Road, Highgate, N19 5DH.
August 30.

Put in quad

From Mr Peter Bowen-Simpkins, FRCOG

Sir, Mr James Robertson's letter (September 1) about the incongruously named "quad bike" reminds me of an incident that occurred many years ago, in the early days of ultrasound diagnosis.

I was delivering a lady of her twins by Caesarean section when I discovered a third baby. The cons were labelled twin I, twin II and twin III.

Yours faithfully,
PETER BOWEN-SIMPKINS,
Cysgod-y-Bryn, 6 Brynview Close,
Reynoldston, Swansea SA3 1AG.
pbs.boscos@virgin.net
September 1.

From Mr Jon Potts

Sir, Isn't the "quad bike" merely the grown-ups' version of what, as a child, I called a "pedal car"?

Yours faithfully,
JON POTTS,
2a St John's Wharf,
104-106 Wapping High Street, E1 9PR.
jon.potts@uk.pwglobal.com

Cold comforts

From Mr E. M. Holt

Sir, If Tony Blair spent his school days in "baronial splendour" (leading article, September 1), living conditions at Scottish public schools must have been very different from those at the English public school I attended.

Yours sincerely,
E. M. HOLT,
Frieze Farm, Crowley,
Hemley-on-Thames RG9 4JL.
September 1.

Marco's home

From Mr John Milligan

Sir, Reading Richard Owen's nicely rounded and easily consumed report on the house discovered during restoration work in Venice (report, September 1), I am pleased that even the "oral tradition" of Venice supports the assertion by the architect concerned that a house with a well in its centre is that of a Polo.

I am, yours faithfully,
JOHN MILLIGAN,
15 Church Square,
Calshields TD1 3JJ.

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Oil venture targets the motorists PAGE 31

ARTS

Courtney bares her soul for her art PAGES 34-37

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SWEDEN IN AWE OF OWEN Pages 45-52

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 4 1998

European refining and marketing link

Shell and Texaco to pool resources

By CARL MORTSHED, INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDITOR

SHELL and Texaco have agreed to pool their refining and marketing interests in Europe...

Shell confirmed yesterday that the \$200 million in savings would come from combining administrative and operational functions...

Wood Mackenzie, Shell will have 30 per cent of the wholesale market for gasoline in the UK...

States is trimming the already thin refining margins of oil companies. Stocks of fuel oil are at record levels...



Lehman deal for ousted Thistle chief

By DOMINIC WALSH

ROBERT PEEL, who was ousted as chief executive of Thistle Hotels in November, is to take over the management of 30 of Thistle's smaller properties...

BUSINESS TODAY

Table with financial data including Stock Market Indices, US Rate, London Money, Sterling, Dollar, North Sea Oil, and Gold.

Enterprise braced for lean spell

By CARL MORTSHED



ENTERPRISE OIL has given warning that it might cut its dividend as part of a drastic series of measures aimed at preparing the company for an extended period of low oil prices.

£80 million to £45 million in the half year to June. The company is maintaining the half-year payout at 6.9p but Alan Marshall, oil analyst at Flemings, expects the full-year dividend, at an estimated cost of £90 million...

its ownership in key assets and reducing costs. Mr Jungels called for collaboration in reducing the overheads burden. He predicted that operating costs could be reduced if companies stopped double-manning when they shared ownership of a field.

Wray cashes in £9.2m stake

By GEORGE SIVELL

NIGEL WRAY, the entrepreneur, has raised £9.2 million through the sale of almost half of his stake in Burford Holdings, the property company where he is chairman.

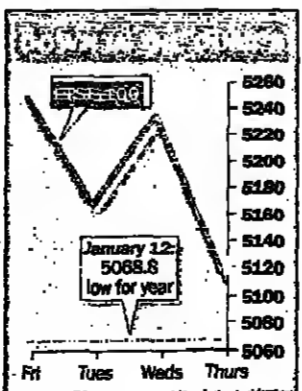
12-month low of 132p in April. Last year Nick Leslau, Mr Wray's former partner, stood down as chief executive of Burford.

Markets fall back as investors take profits

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

LEADING stock markets slumped again yesterday as investors used the recent bounce in prices to take profits amid ongoing nervousness about prospects for the world economy.

tors were rattled by a fall in the dollar to a nine-month low against the mark and a ten-week low against the yen. In Russia, the rouble was fixed at 13,4608 to the dollar but was later quoted at 16,00/22,00 to the dollar as the stand-off between President



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Meriwether fund plummets by 44%

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

LONG-TERM Capital Management, a \$4 billion (£24 billion) investment fund administered by John Meriwether, the former vice-chairman of Salomon Brothers, has lost 44 per cent of its net assets in the past month as markets plunged around the world.

their widely celebrated options pricing model. Long-term Capital lost \$1.8 billion on investments around the world. The loss for the year so far stands at 52 per cent of net assets.

responsibility for a bond trading scandal and set up his own money management company, drawing on his many Wall Street contacts. Mr Meriwether said: "August has been very painful for all of us."

sure. More than 80 per cent of the losses were incurred by interest rate bets in Group of Seven countries. These so-called arbitrage bets are similar to Mr Meriwether's ground-breaking mathematical work at Salomon.

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Floored by Hurricane Boris



COMMENTARY by our City Editor

Hurricane Boris made another frenzied circuit of the Atlantic seaboard yesterday. And this vortex of financial confidence shows no signs of blowing itself out yet.

Another milestone was passed in London and New York, as all the share price gains since the first day of the year were finally eliminated. In London, the next bad day will surely take the FTSE 100 index to a new low for the year and threaten the 5,000 mark. In New York, the equivalent S&P Composite index has already tumbled heading below the round 1,000.

The best that can be said is that the main Far Eastern markets have decoupled a bit, thanks to direct government intervention. In Tokyo, however, this departure could prove as temporary as Russia's government.

The importance of Russia's financial implosion was emphasised by the inability of the visiting Bill Clinton to do the slightest thing about it. That is embarrassing even for one who is by now used to daily embarrassment.

This is chaos: tangible, convincing chaos. The rouble has halved in value. Some food prices are doubling on the streets. Oil exports are drying up because banks cannot meet port dues.

Turmoil embroiling leaders who are household names evidently carries emotional messages to denizens of London and Wall Street that even the compa-

able meltdown in Indonesia failed to convey to the markets of the West. The rupiah dropped 80 per cent, people had to return to the villages for food and programs bloodied the streets. As rising bond prices produced unexpected leaps in share prices, however, it all seemed so far away.

Hurricane Boris will keep blowing until Russia has a new government. But its energy cannot propel Western markets indefinitely.

Here lies the chance of a return to stability. Events closer to home can count. The most immediate is tonight's meeting of Ki-ichi Miyazawa, Japan's veteran Finance Minister, with his American counterpart and with Alan Greenspan, the world's most reassuring central banker.

Let us hope the talks do not just end with a wringing of hands and injunctions to Japan to reflate and close down its banks simultaneously.

Rather, we need some gnomish comments from Mr Greenspan to the effect that the Fed stands ready to cut interest rates at the first sign of a threat to demand in the US economy. We do not need a co-ordinated rate cut, if only because the Bank of Japan has pre-

vious little left to cut. The second guide will be the trend of corporate earnings and prospects as the reporting season heats up. In London, this starts on Monday and could exercise more influence than usual on America's Labour Day holiday. The auguries are not good.

Better hope that Wall Street's big spenders will return from the long weekend as buoyantly as they did 12 months ago.

Petrol for the people

Despite John Prescott's determination to wear us away from the motor car, the price of petrol remains an important issue for the national psyche. And the one certainty to be divined from yesterday's wondrously vague announcement from Shell and Texaco is that it is not intended to bring down the price at the pump. Fill-

ing up the Deputy Prime Minister's Jaguar at a Shell station will not bring savings for the public purse.

The vigour has now ebbed from the petrol price war that was initiated by the supermarkets' brazen entry into the marketplace. Now those who are left on the battlefield are allowing the slump in oil prices to fatten up their forecourt margins. This is scant compensation for those, like Shell and Texaco, whose interests run from the messy upstream business of producing oil to the increasingly glossy downstream places that sell petrol alongside pizzas. But the \$12 barrel is wonderful news for the likes of Tesco and Asda, which are now raking in the profits from an exercise that originally came close to being a loss leader.

The supermarkets' arrival has drastically reshaped petrol retailing, driving out the independents with the same ferocity that has exterminated thousands of butch-

ers, bakers and fishmongers around the country. The integrated oil companies have had to retaliate by turning their petrol stations into supermarkets, sometimes in partnership with established grocers such as Budgens, sometimes alone. Heron has even been experimenting with a grocery home delivery service, thereby enabling its customers to forgo buying any petrol.

Together, Shell and Texaco will continue the trend towards turning petrol stations into glitzy retail emporiums, just as the merged BP and Amoco will. But these establishments need heavy passing trade to justify their overheads and there is a growing risk that rural localities will find themselves increasingly distant from fuel suppliers. Even Mr Prescott is prepared to concede that in some parts of the country a private car is an essential, yet the petrol for those vehicles is likely to become harder to reach.

The competition authorities in

Europe and Britain will undoubtedly investigate this latest coupling and could demand some divestments. But it is the Transport White Paper, when it belatedly arrives, which might encourage the odd independent to open up a simple petrol station right where local customers might want it.

SFO makes heavy work of Wickes

The new team at Wickes has hammered together a set of results which demonstrates why shareholders were right to believe two years ago that there was a basically sound business lying behind the extraordinarily cooked books.

Yet rejoicing over first-half profits of £11.5 million underlines just how distorted were accounts which overstated profits by a massive £50 million. The directors who were in office during those apparently fat years fed well on the company: chairman Henry Sweetbairn's 1995 remuneration topped £1.2 million. He, chairman of the Association of Lloyd's Names, assuring him that he and fellow gamblers will continue to be welcome. At least they know the downside now.

one has been truly called to account for the scandal.

It was November 1996 when the Serious Fraud Office began poring over the matter and its investigations apparently continue. The accounting system which Wickes adopted was undoubtedly complicated but the SFO should surely have unravelled it by now.

No one is suggesting that there have been accounting irregularities at Marchpole, but the company's apparently late discovery of vanishing margins did raise some eyebrows yesterday. In the label-conscious fashion market, YSL prices seem to allow plenty of room for profit. Marchpole was talking gleefully of such things so recently that yesterday's gloomy news left some investors feeling aggrieved.

Gamble at Lloyd's

THERE are still some people who wish to be Lloyd's names. Despite the horrors, they want the right to risk their all and have been agitated at the prospect that Lloyd's would freeze them out in favour of corporate capital. Well, now they can rest easy. Lloyd's chairman, Max Taylor, has written to Michael Deeny, chairman of the Association of Lloyd's Names, assuring him that he and fellow gamblers will continue to be welcome. At least they know the downside now.

Confident Isotron advances

Isotron, the sterilisation group, raised profits before tax by 19 per cent to £5.4 million in the year to June 30 on sales up 13 per cent to £13.4 million.

Earnings rose from 25.5p to 32.3p and the total dividend rises 10 per cent to 6.98p a share.

The company says that the current year has started well. The shares rose 2 1/2p to 510p.

Avonside up

Avonside, the building services group, increased pre-tax profits from £1.07 million to £1.74 million in the six months to June 30 on sales up from £40.15 million to £41.44 million. The half-year dividend rises from 0.50p to 0.75p-out of earnings up from 1.77p to 2.80p. The shares rose 2p to 37 1/2p.

Grafton ahead

Grafton, the building products group that recently took over British Dredging, raised pre-tax profits by 28 per cent to £19.1 million (£8 million) in the six months to June 30 on sales up 32 per cent to £154 million. The half-year dividend rises 24 per cent to 10.5p-out of earnings up 26 per cent to 47.6p.

E&G drops

Estates & General, the property group, saw a fall in pre-tax profits from £1.1 million to £604,000 in the six months to June 30. The group, however, suffered from the absence of the previous first half's £443,000 profit on the sale of investment properties. Earnings fell from 4.1p to 2.1p but the half-year dividend rises 67 per cent to 0.5p a share.

Plantation focus

Plantation & General Investments, the African investment group chaired by Rupert Pennant-Rea, is raising £10 million to help with its attempts to focus on tropical agriculture. Half-year profits rose 82 per cent to £1.6 million. Earnings were 1.9p (1.30p) in the six months to June 30.

Abbot rises

Abbot, the oil services group, raised pre-tax profits by 22 per cent to £8.62 million in the six months to June 30 on sales up 24 per cent to £89.8 million. Earnings rose 23 per cent to 4.3p and the half-year dividend rises 25 per cent to 1p. The company believes the current volatility in its market will provide good opportunities for growth.



Bill Grimsey, chief executive of Wickes, the DIY chain, which recorded a 20 per cent rise in sales at its refurbished stores

Wickes records strong growth since revamp

By PAUL DURMAN

INVESTORS in Wickes took heart yesterday from evidence that the DIY chain's new store format is producing a 20 per cent uplift in like-for-like sales (see Commentary this page).

Bill Grimsey, chief executive, said he could see no reason why Wickes should not be able to repeat this improvement as it refurbishes the rest of its 123 stores. Shares in Wickes, which have dropped from more than 340p in June, recovered 23p to end the day at 236 1/2p.

The new format stores, the first six of which opened in April, set out to offer a more women-friendly environment, a wider choice of paints, lighting and floor coverings, and better service.

So far, Wickes seems to be achieving its aim of winning a bigger share of the decorating market, while retaining its traditionally strong position in building materials.

Mr Grimsey said Wickes would spend another £65 million refurbishing its stores over the next three years. It plans to refit 36 next year in addition to its store opening programme.

Wickes was reporting first-half pre-tax profits of £11.5 million, after losing £14.7 million in the same period last year, mainly because of a £16 million write-off of goodwill. Operating profits from the continuing business also improved strongly from £5.9 million to £10.4 million.

The group's sales increased from £254.9 million to £267.9 million, which included like-for-like sales growth of 5.1 per cent. The first eight weeks trading of the second half showed a 6.9 per cent improvement in like-for-like, helped by a summer sale of kitchens and conservatories.

With cash of more than £30 million, Mr Grimsey said it was "just ridiculous" that the stock market values Wickes at only £182 million even after yesterday's share price rise.

Wickes is paying an interim dividend of 2p, the first since the accounting scandal that is still being investigated by the Serious Fraud Office.

Marley plans to return £40m to shareholders

By PAUL DURMAN

MARLEY, the bricks and tiles group whose shares have been on the slide for most of the past four years, is to return about £40 million to shareholders.

The company yesterday reported a 13 per cent increase in first-half pre-tax profits to £27.6 million, although this was flattered by excluding the £1.5 million loss on its disposal of two US businesses.

Marley achieved a sharp profits improvement in the UK, making £11 million (£6.4 million) thanks to a strong first quarter for bricks, blocks and tiles, with higher prices and further cost savings. The North American business also made progress with profits of £16 million (£14.1 million), but Marley suffered setbacks in continental Europe, Australasia and South Africa.

The company said demand from the UK housing market has weakened, but the US economy remains strong. It expects little improvement from Australasia or South Africa.

The capital repayment will be effected via an issue of "B" shares which Marley will buy back at their nominal value of 11 and five-sevenths pence.

The interim dividend was unchanged at 2.1p a share.

Tempus, page 30

Dispute adds up to blocking tactics

By ROBERT BRUCE

THE row that has led to the London Investment Banking Association (Liba) reaching agreements with the British Venture Capital Association, enabling the principles of capping and proportionate liability to be accepted as an official and universal code of practice.

Now the same process of negotiating an agreement has started with the investment banks. But negotiations have been slow and accountancy firms and investment banks are using the negotiations over the terms of engagement for individual due diligence assignments as a tactic in this process.

It is not uncommon now for six-figure sums to be spent on the terms of engagement talks, said one accountant. This tactic so enraged one member of Liba's committee that the letter to the Office of Fair Trading was sent off. "They are trying to rattle our cages," said one accountant.

Currently capping and other forms of limiting of liability are common at accountancy firms doing due diligence work. The normal limit for large assignments is £25 million. On smaller assignments a multiple of fees, for example, ten times fees, is common.

There will always be jockeying for position, said one accountant. Both sides want to maximise their return for the least assumption of risk.

But there is also a dispute about the amount of work done in due diligence cases.

Investment bankers argue that they have to rely on the accountant's work. Accountants argue that the amount of comfort depends on the amount and quality of the work that they do and suggest that often investment banks are not commissioning them to do enough to provide the degree of comfort required.

"We should either do more and more work," said one accountant, "to fulfil the expectations, or decide that it is not necessary depending on what is really needed."

"A lot of compliance work isn't worth anything," he concluded.

Slough Estates chief confident

**By ROBERT COLE
CITY CORRESPONDENT**

SIR NIGEL MOBBS, chairman of Slough Estates, the industrial property company, weighed in with a strong message of support for the sector yesterday. He said: "The property sector is fundamentally sound with high occupancy, improving rents and a good supply and demand balance."

The comments came as Slough reported interim pre-tax profits that slipped back from £50.5 million to £49.6 million. However, the comparative figures for 1997 were flattered by contributions from sales of investment properties and from income derived from an investment in the Candover venture capital fund. Operating profits rose 3 per cent to £71.4 million.

Slough is raising the interim dividend by more than 21 per cent to 4.125p from 3.4p. The company said that shareholders should not expect a similarly large rise with the final dividend. It promised, however, to pay at least an unchanged final, making a total of 10.25p for the full year.

Tempus, page 30

BT to speed up Internet access

By RAYMOND SNOODY, MEDIA EDITOR

BT has launched a device to speed up access to the Internet for consumers who have long complained about the time it takes to open up Internet sites on their computers at home.

The BT Highway service will also allow householders to use their telephone line at the same time as surfing the Internet or sending e-mail.

A range of BT Highway services aimed at consumers and small businesses will be launched on September 15. Afshin Mohebbi, managing director of BT's business division, said his aim was to have BT Highway in every household within five years.

Already 4,500 BT engineers have been trained to install the new service, which will be available across 90 per cent of the UK from the outset.

The Highway service, BT said, transforms a customer's existing telephone line into "a new, fast, reliable and multi-functional digital Internet and multimedia connection."

BT claims that Highway can connect with the Internet in two seconds.

Consumers will need an ISDN card for their PC costing around £50 and there will be an installation charge of £16.33 for upgrading the line. The monthly rental will be £40 which includes a £15 monthly free call allowance.

Canadian broker bought by HSBC

By RICHARD MILES, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

HSBC Holdings has bought Gordon Capital, a Canadian institutional investment broker with net assets of C\$45 million (£17.3 million).

Gordon Capital will be renamed HSBC Securities, the group's investment banking arm, which will continue to be a wholly owned subsidiary of Hongkong Bank of Canada.

By combining Gordon Capital with its securities division, HSBC believes it will create a leading Canadian full-service investment dealer with a network of 350 research analysts.

Youssef Nasr, president and chief executive officer of Hongkong Bank of Canada, said: "It offers Canadians an alternative—a domestic firm with excellent connections for accessing world markets."

In the shadow, page 31

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CHANGING TIMES

STOCK MARKET



MICHAEL CLARK

Stock Market Writer of the Year

FTSE retreats as Wall St fails to hold on to gains

THE handbrake came off again yesterday as share prices on both sides of the Atlantic went into reverse. It was the failure of Wall Street to hold on to its overnight gains that started the rot in London.



Peter Mason was in bullish mood about prospects as Amec's shares rose despite a virtual halving in profits

up 10p at 149p. Profits may have virtually halved at £22.6 million but the group, led by Peter Mason, chief executive, was in bullish mood about prospects.

Not much cheer for shareholders of Carole Engineering as the shares dived 23 1/2p to 106 1/2p after warning that tough trading conditions in the textile industry were taking a toll of operations.

A profits warning left Silk Industries nursing a loss of 18p at 63 1/2p. The company says profits will fall short of expectations and blames the strong pound and the downturn in Asia.

News of a profits warning also left Maybora Group 25p down at 65p. It says profits for the current year will fall substantially below last year's £4.4 million.

Avic Europe moved into reverse with a fall of 7 1/2p to 21p. Credit Suisse First Boston, the broker, has downgraded its recommendation for the car rental group from "buy" to "hold".

But CSFB has taken a shine to newcomer Coca-Cola Beverages, 3 1/2p better at 154p. The shares have also been supported by reports that it may soon be vying for a place among the top 100 companies.

Barford moved up to 95p on the back of interim results. Nigel Wray, chairman, has reduced his 5 per cent holding in the company by half, raising £9.2 million in the process. He continues to hold 11.54 million shares.

GIIT-EDGED: The latest setback for the equity market provided the perfect springboard for bonds, which enjoyed another robust session. The market was heartened by the latest economic news showing a slowdown in the service sector, which has been blamed for fuelling inflation.

In the futures pit, the December series of the long gilt touched £12.64 before closing £0.44 higher at £12.29 as a total of 64,000 contracts were completed. The short-dated future also put on £0.16 at £105.40 in thin conditions.

Among conventional issues, Treasury 8 per cent 2021 rose 1 1/2p to £136 1/2p in shorts Treasury 7 per cent 2002 was five ticks better at £102 1/2p.

NEW YORK: A fall in morning trading fulfilled early expectations of stock market weakness. By midday the Dow Jones Industrial average was down 105.56 at 7,676.81.

Share prices lost ground as the morning wore on, with investors bracing themselves for further losses when New York resumed trading. Their caution was well placed. The Dow Jones industrial average fell almost 150 points during the first hour of trading as the collapse of emerging market economies came back to haunt investors.

The FTSE 100 index managed to close above its managed for the day, finishing 117.1 down at 5,187.7 in thin trading that saw just 851 million shares change hands.

By contrast the FTSE All-Share index was just 48.59 down at 2,378.16 by the close. Brokers say the market's heister-skelter performance is set to continue in the short term although attention is likely to focus on domestic considerations next week.

The Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee is due to meet and there is a long list of blue-chip companies to report. Reed International was the best-performing company among the top 100, adding 3 1/2p at 470p as the market responded to talk of a big buy recommendation on Reed Elsevier. Stock shortages also boosted Granada 2 1/2p to 80 1/2p.

Orange was again in the doldrums, dropping 3 1/2p to 550p and still pondering claims that Hutchison Whampoa may be poised to reduce its holding in the company. Reports from the Far East suggest it wants to acquire a stake in Hong Kong Telecom, the quoted subsidiary of Cable & Wireless, off 7p at 587p.

Pilkington, Britain's biggest glassmaker, hit a new low with the price falling 7p to 68 1/2p. The setback was blamed on a seller of one million shares at 68 1/2p. They seem to be playing for big stakes at David Brown, where the price firmed another 6p to 243 1/2p. Just a couple of weeks ago the company announced it was in bid talks.

PizzaExpress continued to rebound, with the price rising 20 1/2p to 616 1/2p, having recently hit a low of 577 1/2p. The shares have now fallen from a peak of 950p this year and

traders claim the selling has been overdone. Peptide Therapeutics has been a weak market of late, with no obvious reason, having slid from a peak of 310p in May, to 83 1/2p, down another 11 1/2p yesterday. Elsewhere in the sector, Vanguard Medica bounced 40p to 270p, seemingly on renewed hopes of it finding a big drugs company

to market the migraine drug that was dropped by SmithKline Beecham earlier this year. Eidos has signed up Liverpool's teenage striker Michael Owen to endorse a range of soccer video games. The group responded to the news with a rise of 25p to 707 1/2p. Brokers gave the thumbs-up to interim results from Amec.

THE food retailers have outperformed the rest of the market by about 10 per cent during the past four Stock Exchange trading sessions as investors wake up to their defensive qualities in falling markets.

As one broker commented: "In fits of panic fund managers anxiously seek out any sectors with defensive merits. Wider market concerns have helped to prop up the food retailing sector".

But investors should think twice before making the switch into this traditionally defensive sector. It seems that the valuations of a number of the big supermarket chains are already up with events while trading conditions become increasingly difficult.

Brokers reckon J Sainsbury, down 9 1/2p at 524p, and Tesco, 6 1/2p cheaper at 173 1/2p, are already fully valued. Instead, attention is being focused on Safeway, up 1 1/2p at 333p, and Asda, 2 1/2p firmer at 187 1/2p. Turnover in Asda was heavy with almost 17 million shares changing hands in the supermarket group.

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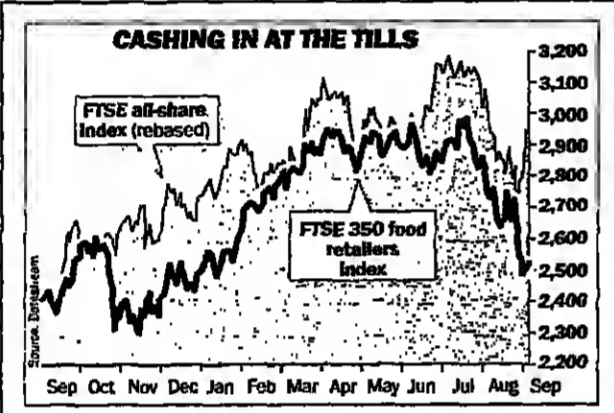
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MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday): Dow Jones 7676.81 (-105.56) S&P Composite 928.69 (-17.78)

Tokyo: Nikkei Average 14261.24 (-115.38)

Hong Kong: Hang Seng 7318.59 (-37.08)

Amsterdam: AEX index 1069.83 (-30.43)

Sydney: All Ordinaries 2131.3 (-2.7)

Frankfurt: DAX 4812.18 (-14.32)

Singapore: Straits 812.70 (-18.15)

Brussels: BEL20 3225.68 (-29.00)

Paris: CAC-40 3696.46 (-83.21)

Zurich: SKA Gen 1286.50 (-17.50)

London: FT 30 3266.7 (-76.3) FTSE 100 5116.7 (-117.1) FTSE 250 4664.4 (-52.8) FTSE 350 2458.0 (-52.0) FTSE Europe 100 2464.58 (-61.85) FTSE All-Share 2378.16 (-48.59) FTSE Non Financials 2448.94 (-38.39) FTSE Food Index 146.98 (-0.38) FTSE Govt Secs 106.20 (-0.39)

RECENT ISSUES: Chaucer A W/S 125, Coca-Cola (160) 154 + 3 1/2, Enterprise Cap B PI 35, Firestone Diamonds 84 - 1, GIBGT Secs Zero Div 167, Douglas 259, Cart Br Income 86 + 1/2, Gart New Income 85, Inter Link Foods 99 + 2, Kill 122 - 1, MEPC Non Cum PI B 90, Metnor Grp 112, Murray Extra Rm Cap 17, Murray Extra Zv Div 99, Murray Extra Zv Div 99, Parallel Pictures 28, Private & Comm Fin 63 + 1, Soda Petroleum 37, SuperRule 90, Syndel Cpl Wt 98/02 22, Toronak 167, Tribune IT Index 261, Walker Greenbank B 33, Williams Group 2, Cadorn n/p (35) 009

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value

Authority casts shadow over HSBC

If HSBC Holdings intended yesterday to divert investors' attention from its Asian predicament with the purchase of a Canadian investment broker with net assets of C\$45 million (£17.3 million), the play did not work. Shareholders and equity analysts were interested in one thing only: the 8.9 per cent stake that the Hong Kong Monetary Authority now holds in the banking group.

The HKMA's decision to swap almost 10 per cent of its cash reserves for HSBC stock caps a dismal 12 months for what was once the UK's biggest company by market capitalisation. Since the London-listed shares hit a peak of nearly £24 in August last year, they have come back down to earth with a bump, trading at about £12.

You do not have to look too hard for the reasons behind HSBC's fall from grace. The stock, which accounts for one third of the Hong Kong equity market, is taken by investors as a bell-wether of the Asian markets and the former British colony in particular. Investors who want quick exposure to these markets therefore buy HSBC. Conversely, when they want out, they sell the bank. In consequence, its share price performance tends to mirror the market as a whole, albeit after an exaggerated fashion.

Richard Miles examines the prospects for Midland's parent after the Hong Kong Monetary Authority's big share purchase

Ironically, HSBC derived more profits from Midland, its UK subsidiary, than Hongkong Bank in the first half of 1998. But South-East Asia is critical to the group's success, said John Leonard, banking analyst at Salomon Smith Barney. "You cannot simply discount Hong Kong to zero. HSBC normally gets a third of its revenues from

Hong Kong and has a large loan portfolio there," he said. More importantly, Asia offers the greatest growth prospects over the medium to long term. HSBC, with its massive capital base — a recent survey rated the group as the world's strongest bank — is well-placed to benefit from any flight to capital in the short term,

and consolidation developments over time. HKMA's intervention, however, is not motivated by any financial needs. The authority has shown no signs of interfering with the group's senior management or its policies. Rather, the consensus is that the HKMA has built up its near 9 per cent stake as part of a

tactical move to warn off speculators who are seeking to undermine the Hong Kong dollar's peg with its US counterpart. According to banking analysts, the speculators had gone short on the Hang Seng, the former colony's main share index, and then attacked the currency in the hope of driving down equity prices. By buying up the stock of HSBC and other large companies, the HKMA has fired a warning shot across the bows of the financial predators. "It wanted to show the speculators that they can lose money as well as

making it," said Mark Thomas of Crédit Lyonnais Securities Europe. For the time being, the HKMA's strategy appears to have worked. But it leaves HSBC with a nasty overhang — what is the authority going to do with its holding? Now that it has a disclosable stake, the HKMA must reveal every transaction until its holding decreases to 3 per cent. Sliding the shares back into the market on the quiet is unrealistic. Mr Thomas believes the HKMA is under no pressure to dispose of the stake. He said: "Equities outperform cash over time, so it could hold on to the holding. What investors need is clarification." But, as Mr Thomas pointed out, this is not in the interests of the HKMA. Meanwhile, HSBC will have to live in the shadow of the authorities.

Shell and Texaco seek new blend during troubled times

Carl Mortishead on how big oil has targeted the motorist with European joint venture

Staff are biting their nails and dusting off their CVs in the bleak office towers of Shell Centre and the Texaco headquarters at Canary Wharf in London. Many have been thinking about their futures for months. Shell and Texaco announced yesterday that they were to merge their downstream European businesses, but staff of both were well aware of the talks. What they do not know is which jobs are on the line and where. Today, they are no wiser.

Shell and Texaco released the bare minimum of information about their plans. Everything, according to the two companies, has yet to be decided — which jobs are to go, which refineries are to be sold or closed, who is to manage the joint venture.

Such a level of indecision sounds odd, but this agreement has not come easily. The companies have ducked the biggest question — the brands. Unlike the BP-Mobil joint venture, where the former's logo fronts the petrol stations while Mobil's brand is on the lubricants, both Texaco's star and Shell's pecten are to remain visible to the consumer. Given the scale of Shell's domination of this alliance — the Anglo-Dutch company will take 88 per cent of the profits of the venture — one might have expected the Texaco star to disappear from European skies.

The City was not bowled over by Shell's achievement. Jürgen Lumsden of Crédit Lyonnais Laing reckons the £200 million (about £120 million) pre-tax savings are a small step forward and he is not impressed by the decision to keep Texaco's brand. "It is a sign of weakness and suggests there has not been a real meeting of minds."

In its defence, Shell would point to its US downstream joint venture, where there has been no withdrawal of brands. Last year Shell Oil, the US subsidiary, agreed to combine its downstream operations with Saudi Aramco and Texaco into a venture called Motiva.



Both Shell's pecten and Texaco's star will remain visible to European consumers despite Shell's domination of the joint venture between the companies

That followed a previous deal between Texaco and Shell on the West Coast and Mid-West, called Equilon. But the two deals are on a different scale, with savings of \$800 million annually, four times the projected savings on yesterday's European deal.

Joint ventures do not come easily to Shell; the company likes to believe its culture is unique and its internally trained management second to none. Whether true or false, such an approach sits uneasily on the board of a joint venture company. But Shell is on the defensive. If the world's largest oil company is prepared to endure middle-management turmoil for the best part of a year just to achieve some £60 million in post-tax savings and a small increase in market share, times must be difficult.

Indeed, a collapse in the oil price to its lowest level in real terms for 25 years has cut deep into profits earned from the wellhead. Shell's own ambitions to raise its return on capital have been blown out of the water, the target having been set 40 per cent higher than the current price of \$12.50.

But a reduced price for the raw material is not helping matters downstream: margins

on refined products are plummeting in Europe and Asia; refineries are cutting their runs in an effort to remove an expanding lake of gasoline and heating oil. The industry is praying for a cold winter.

City analysts say Shell earned a miserable 6 per cent return on capital employed from its European downstream businesses last year, while Texaco's 3,000 petrol stations, three lubricants plants and its interests in two refineries made a profit of less than \$100 million. In the previous year Texaco chalked up a loss.

Turning that round will not be easy and may require the co-operation of third parties, not to mention regulators. According to Wood Mackenzie, the consultants, Shell will end up with 30 per cent of the wholesale gasoline market in Britain with the addition of Texaco's 190,000 barrels-per-day refinery at Pembroke in Wales. It will also raise its petrol retailing share to 22 per cent, adding 1,000 Texaco stations to Shell's 1,800 outlets, recently enlarged by the purchase of 382 Gulf stations.

The European Commission will be even more exercised by the prospect of Shell-Texaco dominance in the Benelux re-

gion, particularly in The Netherlands, where Shell already has 30 per cent of the market.

Selling a few petrol stations to satisfy Karel Van Miert, the competition commissioner, should be only a minor problem for the two companies. The big headache is refining, a business which the Anglo-Dutch company recently said had an oversupply in Europe equivalent to 13 refineries.

In agreeing to shut down its Shell Haven refinery, Shell recently made its own contribution to reducing the glut. However, the loss of 90,000 barrels of capacity becomes a net gain with the addition of Texaco's Pembroke facility. And in The Netherlands Texaco adds a 35 per cent interest in the Nerefo refinery, operated by BP, to Shell's huge Pernis facility.

Fergus Macleod of BT Alex Brown, the investment bank, reckons that BP may be the key to success of the Shell-Texaco joint venture. "If BP agreed to close that refinery, Shell could supply the BP-Mobil joint venture in Holland." Such a deal could be sweetened by throwing in a few petrol stations, thereby reducing an excessive market

effect of throwing thousands of independent dealers out of business, volumes are much higher and unit costs are lower. Of course, Esso could spoil the Shell-Texaco party with a grab for market share, as could Tesco, the food retailer, which started the ball rolling with low-cost petrol.

But with margins of between 5p and 6p per litre, Tesco is now earning profits it never dreamed of from petrol. Integrated oil companies could afford petrol price wars when oil was \$18 per barrel at the wellhead. The world is different at \$12 per barrel, and the difference needs to be made up somewhere — for big oil, the motorist is a good place to start.

Big oil has been busy restoring its margins in Britain and thanks to the Esso Pricewatch campaign, which had the

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BUSINESS LETTERS

Flight of fancy by critics of Airbus Industrie

From the Vice-President, Corporate Communications, Airbus Industrie.

Sir, Oliver August (Airbus set to take on Boeing again over TWA order, Business News, September 1) comes out with the same tired, old argument which US so-called experts and analysts of every ilk level at us each time we win an order: we sold at a loss. Could it not be that we are more efficient than our competitors, that we offer products that have quantifiable, significant benefits in operation?

Oliver August refers to the recent British Airways purchase from us as "controversial". There is nothing controversial about this transaction. "The right product, at the right time, at the right price", to quote Mr Ayling of British Airways, won the day. This transaction is a profitable one for Airbus Industrie.

If Airbus Industrie were in business to "sell" at a loss, one wonders why it would have taken 25 years for the consortium to get to its present place in the market. Why would Airbus lose any sales campaign? Finally, it is worth noting that Airbus Industrie has all but two of the top ten US airlines as customers. We have made and have every intention to continue to make significant progress in the US market to the benefit of the airlines and their customers.

Yours sincerely,
ROBERT ALIZART
(Vice-President, Corporate Communications),
Airbus Industrie,
1 Ron Point Maurice Bellonte,
31707 Blagnac,
Cedex, France.

Letters can be faxed to Times Business on: 0171-782 5112

Conflict threatens transport policy for Allied payoff

From Mr David Perill

Sir, Your corporate profile of the transport company Stagecoach (Business News, August 31) assigns scores of 9/10 for its financial record, 9/10 for share performance but only 6/10 for attitude to staff and 4/10 for ethical expansion.

The company's bus service in Cambridge, where there are cancellations due to "driver shortage" — is encouraging more, rather than fewer, people to take their cars into the city. This highlights once again the conflict between commitment to profit and commitment to service which will, if not suitably addressed, be the downfall of any transport policy designed to reduce the number of private cars on our roads.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID PERRILL,
12 High Street,
Girton,
Cambridge, CB3 0PU.

No justification for Allied payoff

From Mr Eddie Walsh

Sir, As a small shareholder in Allied Carpets I am disgusted at the £156,000 payoff to the departing senior operations director.

The excuse given that this would prevent him from joining a rival company is a joke. The payoffs to Steve Barber and David Brut, the finance director, were not approved by shareholders who surely would not have even sanctioned giving them a couple of carpet remnants.

If the accounting irregularities have been ongoing for some five years, one wonders about the competence of those who carried out due diligence at flotation in 1996.

Yours faithfully,
EDDIE WALSH,
7 Coiswood Court,
Beeston,
Nottingham,
NG9 3LJ.

All smiles

SMILES Brewery in Bristol could be heading for the stock market, I hear. The company, whose investors include Firkin founder David Bruce, has launched a £3.75 million share placing to allow it to buy out its two BES pub companies. It is hoping to get its shares listed on Olex in the next few months and a move up to AIM is likely within three years.

Smiles was founded in 1977 by local restaurateur John Payne, who originally started brewing beer to sell in his dining room. But such was its popularity that customers started coming in with bottles and con-



Pajares: about to unveil a new bar at Claridge's

tainers in which to take the stuff home and a new business was born. The latest move is being driven by Ian Williams, the accountant who bought out the brewery in 1992, and Martin Loades, the new chief executive.

For Mr Loades the move to Smiles, which has a turnover of about £7 million, represents something of a sea change — he has spent the past 18 years with Scottish & Newcastle, later as planning director for its Scottish Courage beer business (turnover £2.1 billion). "It's like leaving Ford to join a specialist carmaker like Morgan — it's a case of going from mass production to handmade," he says.

Crosswires

BEWARE companies bearing reports about the growth of electronic commerce (a horrid phrase). Even if we overlook the fact that every single debit and credit card transaction carried out all over the world every day is technically electronic commerce (a simple fact rarely acknowledged by IT gurus), the dozens of reports compiled on the subject offer little insight. "European companies



competition that persuaded Jayesh Manek, a two-time winner, to set up the Manek Growth Fund. Of his new student, Mr Dawson writes: "His ambitions are a little short of Mr Manek's but I trust he will contribute more than a little to the cause."

are harnessing the true potential of the Internet" gushed MORI. At the same time, Andersen Consulting offered this pearl: "The greatest barrier to Europe's success in the emerging electronic economy is a surprising hesitancy among the Continent's business leaders. European executives are still standing on the sidelines." Please, no more.

Good cause

THE changes wrought by Ramon Pajares since he became managing director of the Savoy Group four years ago have sometimes prompted thinly veiled racist comments by people who should know better. The die-hard traditionalists responsible for spreading such bile will doubtless be sharpening their knives as Mr Pajares prepares to unveil a new bar at Claridge's in what was previously the Causeuse restaurant (which, as I recall, used to turn out a pretty decent smörgåsbord).

But Savoyards should hold fire before they start lambasting the £650,000 project. Mr Pajares tells me that whereas the Causeuse had only been going since the Second World War, the archives show that Claridge's had a bar for about 20 years after it first opened its doors. The return of a proper bar to London's grande dame is a very welcome development.

BEEER is clearly in the blood of the Martin family. Earlier this year, Gerry Martin unveiled plans to bring his Old Monk pub company to AIM, some six years after big brother Tim launched JD Wetherspoon into the public arena. Among Old Monk's non execs is father Roy, a former Wetherspoon director who spent almost 30 years at Guinness. Meanwhile, grandfather Randall, now 92, worked for Allied Breweries, going on to run the staff social club long after he had retired. "When we go to the pub together we tend not to talk about anything else but pubs," admits Gerry. "The wives get sick of us."

DOMINIC WALSH



The true voice



Elizabeth Lowry on Katherine Mansfield

Autumn fiction

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Sellers gain upper hand

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
4.25	4.15	Alcoa	4.20	-0.05	-1.2	11.5
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

BANKS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

BREWERIES, PUBS & REST

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

BUILDING MATERIALS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

CHEMICALS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

CONSTRUCTION

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

DISTRIBUTORS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

ENGINEERING VEHICLES

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

FOOD MANUFACTURERS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

HEALTHCARE

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

HOUSEHOLD SDS & TEXT

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

INSURANCE

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

MEDIA

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

PHARMACEUTICALS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

PRINTING & PAPER

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

MINING

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

PROPERTY

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

TRANSPORT

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

OTHER FINANCIAL

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.15	1.10	Amgen	1.12	-0.03	-2.7	14.6

RETAILERS, FOOD

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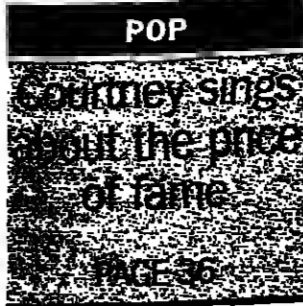
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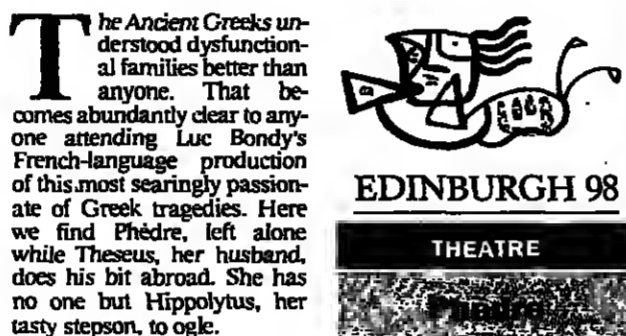


OPINION The protean genius of Gershwin PAGE 35

THE TIMES ARTS



Good old family values



Susan Patterson sings Rusalka at the ENO

The Ancient Greeks understood dysfunctional families better than anyone... That becomes abundantly clear to anyone attending Luc Bondy's French-language production of this most searingly passionate of Greek tragedies.



Psychological depth: Valerie Dreville (left) as Phèdre and Dominique Frot as Oenone

Life and love on the inside

Declan Croghan, Irish author of this attractive, thoughtful play, has worked as a navy as well as an actor and, so the programme tells us, 'has a teenager spent some years in hospital'.

True, this is a two-hander, so you can hardly claim to have seen a representative cross section of torturous hard men. Moreover, one of the characters we meet is a decidedly odd fish to find anywhere near the Liffey.

LONDON THEATRE

Glasgow who turned rent boy in Dublin and injured an excessively demanding client. 'I hit him over the head with the lid of the cistern,' he says in his ingenious way.

NEIL COOPER

FESTIVAL MUSIC: Gerald Lerner on Finnish verve, Lieder charm and music-theatre disaster

The great attraction of the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra's second concert (Usher Hall) was not the orchestra itself, refreshingly keen ensemble though it is, nor even its conductor, familiar figure though Jukka-Pekka Saraste is in Scotland.

Sublime swansong

It is also a challenge to an orchestra's command of fine detail, which was clearly no problem to the Finns, and just the score to offset Saraste's brilliant, unrestrained interpretation of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony.

THEATRE REVIEW

Shakespeare Theatre's production of Twelfth Night is a gem of a production... The production is a gem of a production, with a superb cast and a superb production.

RECOMMENDED THIS WEEKEND

Guides to arts and entertainment compiled by Marti Hargis

LONDON

BBC PROMS: Tonight (7pm) the Chicago Symphony Orchestra led by Daniel Barenboim plays Strauss's Till Eulenspiegel, orchestral pieces by Berg, and Tchaikovsky's Patience symphony. Tomorrow (7.30pm) Vladimir Ashkenazy conducts the European Union Youth Orchestra in a concert featuring Andrew Mather's Manne a travers les arbres followed by works by Berg and Strauss, while on Sunday (7.30pm) Tippett's pacifist work A Child of Our Time is performed by the London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus under Colin Davis.

HEAVENLY HARMONY

The annual season of early music opens with a weekend of chivalry inspired sounds. A semi-staging of Handel's Orlando by the Early Opera Company takes place tonight, while tomorrow offers a concert by the New London Consort and Philip Pickett of songs by the medieval monk Galanor de Sully. Sunday concludes with Byrd, Locke, Purcell et al. played by the vocal consort Phalaris.

ELSEWHERE

EDINBURGH: The BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the Edinburgh Festival Chorus give the British premiere of Libera, Smetana's homage to his Czech homeland, in a concert performance at the Festival Theatre tonight (7.15pm). Concerts by the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra under Charles Mackerras feature Smetana and Mahler, tonight, while the tone poem Misa Viva brings the Festival to a rousing conclusion tomorrow (Luther Hall, 8pm). Box Office: (0131-473 2000).

NEW WEST END SHOWS

Jeremy Kingston's choice of theatre showing in London

■ Home full, returns only ■ Some seats available ■ Seats at all prices

- CRIME AND PUNISHMENT: First production of the 19th-century French novel by Dostoyevsky. Phalaris. 0131-473 2000.
THE LADY BOYS OF BANGKOK: Bizarre West End appearance for 20. Theatricals. 0131-473 2000.
SIX THINGS WE DO FOR LOVE: Mark Raymond directs Belinda Lang in Alan Ayckbourn's comedy about a surprising love and its unrequited consequences for lovers. Duchess. 0171-494 5075.
FULL GALLOP: Mary Louise Wilson's performance as Diana Vreeland, the Vogue fashion diva.

FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE

Geoff Brown's choice of the latest movies

NEW RELEASES

- CARESSÉS: Rarified Spanish film about unrequited love from idiosyncratic director Ventura Pons, adapted from a play and packed with wit.
HANDS (PG): Poetic, tender, dialogue-free Russian film documenting society's outcasts in the town of Roshchino.
HE GOT GAMES (18): Earnest tutor needs to make peace with his son, a gifted basketball player, Endeavouring to find his way back to his father's school in Washington, Ray Liotta, and Aaron Copland's music.
THE LAND GIRLS (12): Pale adventures of three young women working on a Dorset farm during the Second World War. David Leland.
THE LAST DAYS OF DISCO (18): Wacky enanglements of college graduates in a New York dance club.

ART GALLERIES

Southall Palladium www.art-gallery.com www.art-gallery.com Edinburgh 0121 857 9227

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AN INSPECTOR CALLS

THEATRES

- DOCTOR DOLITTLE
THE WOMAN IN BLACK
THE REDUCED SHAKESPEARE COMPANY
AN INSPECTOR CALLS
THE REAL INSPECTOR HOUND
BLACK COMEDY
THE WOMAN IN BLACK
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THEATRES

- THE LIGHTS TWINKLE SOMETIMES
THE UNION OF COMIC SHORTS
THE CRUCIBLE by Arthur Miller
OFF WEST END
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CAROLINE NIN-If you love me
FULL GALLOP

Large advertisement on the right side of the page, featuring a large image and text including 'Hail the', 'PERFECT', and 'Includes music and... Digitally recorded... Available as a CD'.

Handwritten text at the bottom: 35 من الأصل

My people are American. My time is today. If those aren't the most famous eight words in the history of 20th-century music, they should be. George Gershwin was born 100 years ago this month. He made that portentous claim in 1926. It was no idle boast. He had three hit shows on Broadway. He had just been the virtuoso piano soloist when his Concerto in F was premiered in classical music's sacred shrine—Carnegie Hall.

He had already read DuBose Heyward's *Porgy*, the novel of black ghetto life which he would turn into the first (the only?) great American opera. Ahead, too, lay his stunning film scores. He was just 27, and had barely 11 years left on this earth. But genius requires no long lease. Like Mozart and Schubert, Gershwin seemed to take musical dictation straight from God, at lightning speed.

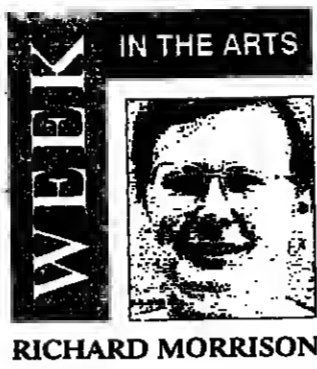
In the days leading up to his centenary (September 26) we will assuredly be blitzed with articles, broadcasts, concerts and record-

Who will answer Gershwin's challenge?

ings galore. Even now some Brit-pop babe is probably perpetrating an horrific crime on *Summertime* or *I Got Rhythm*. But in truth, Gershwin's music hardly needs celebrating. It's in the air we breathe. That is the mark of his stature.

What does need attention—especially at the end of a century in which musical culture has fragmented into a thousand self-regarding clans, cliques and coteries—is Gershwin's stupendous vision of what a composer should be. "True music must repeat the thought and aspirations of the people and the time," he said. "My people are American. My time is today."

What messianic presumption! What all-embracing ambition! It takes chutzpah to say such things, especially if your parents emigrated to the country (with "plenty o' nothin'") only 30 years earlier. And it takes genius to deliver the re-



RICHARD MORRISON

sults. Gershwin had buckets of both. What's more, he had high ideals. The celebrated insecurity of his Lower East Side childhood—25 addresses in 20 years—shouldn't mask the fact that he and brother Ira (his lifelong lyrics) were outstandingly bright, well-read kids. George might have started his career as the youngest song-plugger in Tin Pan Alley, but his serious intent was quickly displayed.

He was just 24 when his songs were included in a classical recital, and only a year older when he made the famous "crossover" breakthrough with *Rhapsody in Blue*. He sought lessons with Ravel (Ravel famously asked him how much he earned, and then declared, with icy Gallic logic, "It is I who should take lessons from you"). And he offered the decidedly unmelodious Arnold Schoenberg a comradely helping hand when Sch-

enberberg fled to America. In other words, Gershwin liked nothing better than schmoozing with "serious" musicians—who were in turn dazzled and often overawed by his mercurial talent. And his gigantic self-confidence cocooned him in a state of blissful indifference to the brigade of sour-faced, cloth-eared critics who loathed him for his insouciant jack-of-all-trades.

His aim was to make epic musical statements that were also truly popular. Had he lived, *Porgy* would surely have been the first of many masterpieces that could have saved the classical world from its 40-year nightmare in Tuneless Alley, and at the same time freed pop music from the straitjacket of the four-minute song format that constricts it to this day.

But Gershwin did not live, and the pressing question is why nobody else has successfully bridged the musical divide. Plenty have tried. Bernstein, whose protean talent rivalled Gershwin's, tossed off terrific musicals but then turned convoluted and pretentious when writing symphonies. Ellington, Lloyd Webber, Mc-

Cartney, Marsalis... the list of popular tunesmiths who have attempted symphonic-sized works is long. But none has united disparate audiences as Gershwin did, and most have been savagely ridiculed for their pains.

Perhaps the melancholy truth is that tastes are now so fragmented, and the division between subsidised music and commercial pop now so institutionalised, that musicians tremble at the thought of making the leap. Don't forget that Gershwin wrote his first hits when Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* was still "new music"; indeed, there is a fair bit of Tchaikovsky and Liszt in *Rhapsody in Blue*. In those days the journey from Tin Pan Alley to Carnegie Hall was still feasible, especially for a man who could handle a daring key-change with far more panache than any conservative professor.

But today? Just consider the stylistic gap between, say, Harrison Birtwistle and Paul McCartney—two knighted composers who are natives of the same county and of roughly the same generation. In musical terms, they don't even inhabit adjacent galaxies.

Of course, plurality is healthy for musical life. But our era's prevailing ethos of blinkered specialisation has crabbed musical ambitions. If composers conquer one field, most go back and try to conquer it again. Perhaps they fear peer scorn; more likely they are nervous about offending their fans.

Either way, few composers in 1998 have the nerve to follow Gershwin's example. As his centenary approaches, the best we can do is to put on a recording of *Porgy* and ponder the sad fact that the seemingly simple trick of telling a touching tale of ordinary folk to ordinary folk, in music of epic power and beauty, has been managed so rarely in the 61 years since a brain tumour felled the greatest melody-maker of our century.

Hail the hair apparent



Tailor-made: the dancers of City Ballet of London in the world premiere of Mark Baldwin's hugely flattering *The Man with a Moustache*

Harold King, has been doggedly running ballet companies for more than 20 years. With London City Ballet, an outfit he kept alive for two decades, he achieved impressive results. But can the same be said for the company he now directs, City Ballet of London?

On the evidence of Balanchine's *Donizetti Variations*,

the work which opened City Ballet's London season on Wednesday night, the answer would have to be no. The performance was embarrassing. Balanchine's Bournonville-style writing—bouncy petit allegro, precise tudy beats and quaint "olde world" romance—exposed fundamental weaknesses in the dancers' strength, stamina and expressive credibility. The princi-

pals, Joanne De Souza and Vitali Malko, were technically mismatched (did this man really dance with the Bolshoi?) and tentative in their duet. Malko's partnering skills were abysmal, his solo work painful to watch; while De Souza's response was to grin madly and pretend everything was all right.

Istvan Hertzog's *Sinfonietta Giocosa* (set to taped Mar-

tinu), which closed the programme, may be the kind of contemporary ballet you order by the metre—speedy, rippling bodies racing through whirling, effervescent Neo-Classicism—but it kept the audience happy and showed the dancers off to far better advantage.

What made the evening worthwhile, however, was Mark Baldwin's *The Man with a Moustache*, commissioned by King from one of Britain's most noted contemporary dance choreographers. Baldwin has here chosen to work in the language these dancers know best—classical ballet—and his writing is sur-

Spark missing in vast space

The last time I heard Maria Friedman at this venue she was singing in a gala tribute to George Gershwin. Since then she has taken the lead in Kurt Weill and Ira Gershwin's psycho-musical *Lady In The Dark*. Her late-night Proms appearance, devoted to the songs of Kurt Weill, Hanns Eisler and Bertolt Brecht, offered more proof of her rare versatility.

The problem she confronted on Wednesday lay in exorcising the ghost of Ute Lemper, who was originally scheduled to appear alongside Robert Ziegler's Matrix Ensemble. While it may be true that Friedman is the better actress, and not all Brecht and Weill enthusiasts are wild about Lemper's interpretations of the classic texts, there was no denying that a certain idiomatic spark was missing from the evening. Neither is the Albert Hall ideal for material this intimate.



Without a full orchestra to cushion her, Friedman sounded underpowered on *Pirate Jenny* and the Eisler-Brecht collaboration, *Nana's Song*. Her light voice—better suited to musical theatre than the concert stage—largely lacked that elusive combination of ardour and world-weariness. *Surabaya Johnny* was much more persuasive. Friedman's skills as an actress allowing her to heighten the aura of anguish and betrayal. She brought a quiet dignity to the appeals to posterity embedded in *To Those Born Later*.

If the vocals proved variable, Ziegler's arrangements, dallying with

jazz textures and rhythms, were superbly handled. Room was also found for pieces as varied as Eisler's *Kleine Sinfonie* and the film music of his Suite No. 2.

The BBC Singers, together with Carolyn Foulkes, Andrew Murgatroyd and Stuart MacIntyre, joined Ziegler for the most idiosyncratic items of all. Eisler's choral settings based on the "War Primer" verse captions written by Brecht to accompany a series of war photographs. The text did not extend far beyond routine anti-war sentiments and paeans to "the red walls of Moscow". Stirring music but partial history, as was the insinuation in the programme that Eisler's deportation from the US in 1948 was the work of Joe McCarthy. "Honest" Joe did not begin to make headlines until two years later.

PERHAPS the oppressively humid weather was partly to blame, but there seemed to be tuning problems from the outset of this BBC Symphony Orchestra Prom.

The magical hush of quiet strings at the start of Webern's *Im Sommerwind* was suddenly broken by the entry of wind chords vibrating out of kilter. In Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto, the crucial quiet end of the slow movement was marred again by tangibly clashing winds, and in Prokofiev's fiendish Fifth Symphony, string and brass sections were laid bare.

Despite this, Manfred Honeck drew an intense performance of *Im Sommerwind* from the orchestra. Its Mahlerian beauties came through in a fluent and warm reading, which managed to slip over the sometimes awkward corners of the

A fluent relay race

young composer's first main opus. Leader Stephen Bryant's solos were luminous.

Lazy rhythms clouded the Fourth Piano Concerto but not Alfred Brendel's performance. Honeck was hyperactive on the podium but rarely drew a reflection of Brendel's understated elegance from the orchestra.

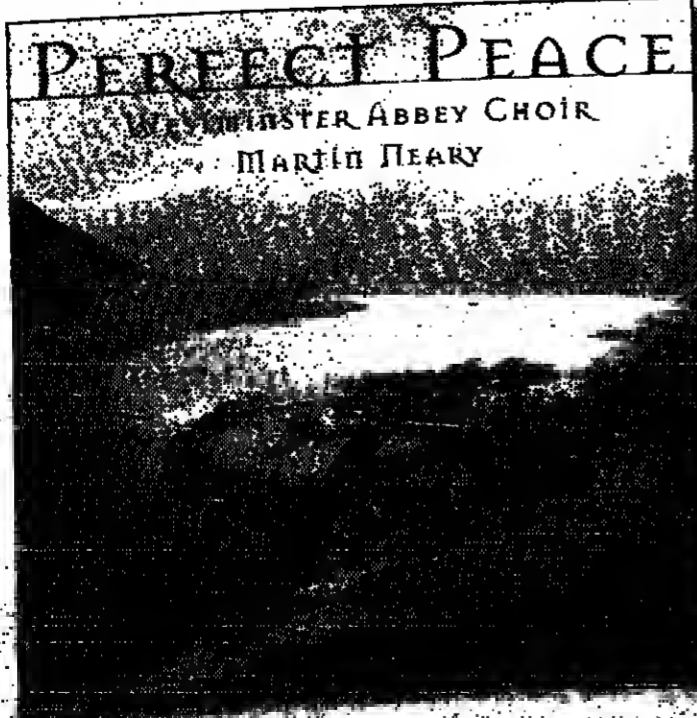
If the orchestra's Beethoven came dressed in fustian clothes, then Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony was the perfect antidote. One of the challenges for a conductor is to define and pace the slow first and third movements. Honeck pro-

duced a truly monumental first, despite the sometimes wandering, uneven crochets of the main theme. Prokofievian melody demands absolute rhythmic precision. The mischievous Scherzo, with its artful mix of ragtime and dissonant classicism, was here irresistible. The extraordinarily Gothic climax of the slow movement was brilliantly staged, but could have done with stronger bass.

It was a shame that the scramble of uncertainty before the end never crescendoed to a convincingly explosive ending; until then, Honeck had dealt well with the relay race of material handed from section to section. Special mention should go to the superb cello guest principal, Timothy Gill.

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DANCE



prisingly conventional, deliberately old-fashioned. He was inspired by the Lord Berners score (taken from *L'uomo dai baffi* and *Valses bourgeoises*), a litty musical adventure prone to mood swings and contrary statement. Baldwin's response to the music's jokey surrealism is a kind of formalism that calls to mind Tudor's well-bred couplings. To this Baldwin adds an impulsiveness, a drunken daring, but what we miss is the music's game-for-anything spirit. The choreography makes light of the fake moustaches and bowler hats, as if Baldwin wanted to go goofy on the props but lost his nerve. But the piece is challenging to perform, enjoyable to watch and hugely flattering to the dancers.

The design and costumes, by Andrew Flint-Shipman, are another plus; they are simply ravishing. Boldly coloured tuxes and elegant waistcoats set against an indigo blue nighttime sky; party attire that looks both glamorous and slightly subversive.

King prefaced the performance with a tribute to Lord Rothermere, the company's honorary president. Without the keen support of Rothermere, who died on Tuesday, King will have to work even harder to ensure City Ballet's survival. More works like *The Man with a Moustache* will surely help to make his case more convincing.

30p

THE TIMES

CANCEL THE MILK.

The great easyJet take-off starts on Monday.

http://www.the-times.co.uk

CHANGING TIMES

DEBRA CRAINE

POP ALBUMS

The Hole truth about fame

Love is a many lumbered thing

HOLE
Celebrity Skin
(Geffen CED 2564, £15.99)
THE difficulty with reviewing the new record by Hole is that it comes laden with so much baggage.

POP ALBUMS

MANSUN
Six
(Parlophone 496722, £15.99)
THOSE of you who admired Mansun's No 1 debut album, Attack Of The Grey Lantern, will probably be a little bemused by this sprawling, relentlessly experimental follow-up.

A mammoth 70 minutes long with rather nebulous concept album pretensions, Six is the work of a group who seem desperate to distance themselves from the hordes of orthodox British guitar bands.

Sprinkled with references to the cult 1960s TV series, The Prisoner (from the cover artwork to the title: six is the number given to the show's star, Patrick McGoohan), the album also features a spoken word contribution from Dr Who's Tom Baker during the interlude, Witness To A Murder (Part 2).

Repeated listening may well be required, but first impressions are of an ambitious but restless band trying a little too hard to be different.

DJIVAN GASPARYAN & MICHAEL BROOK
Black Rock
(Real World CDR W73 7243 8 46230 2 9, £14.99)
IN AN unusual but ultimately



Parts greater than the Hole: post-Kurt Cobain, Courtney Love (second from left, with the rest of her band) is now rock star, actress and model, but is mostly famous for being famous

inspired musical union, Canadian guitarist/producer Michael Brook has joined forces with the Armenian duduk maestro, Djivan Gasparian. The duduk is a sonorous, nasal-sounding woodwind instrument similar to the oboe which, when played by the likes of Gasparian, a music professor in the Armenian capital of Yerevan, becomes a conduit for the most haunting and melancholic sounds one is likely to hear.

guitar melodies provide the ideal backdrop, lending the album a spacious, open-ended feel. Although mostly instrumental, the sleeve notes inform us that these are songs steeped in the Armenian folk tradition, the principal subjects being the love of the homeland (Freedom, Fallen Star) and the love of a woman (Take My Heart, Together Forever).

Partly recorded in Peter Gabriel's Real World Studios in Bath and partly on the island of Lanzarote, whose black volcanic landscape was the inspiration for the title, Black Rock combines the ancient and the modern to produce something that transcends both.

LAMBCHOP
What Another Man Spills
(City Slang EFA 08711-2, £14.49)
THE fifth album from Nashville's maverick nine-piece col-

lective, Lambchop, is another compelling hotchpotch of sad-eyed, heart-broken laments and loose-limbed country rock-outs with, this time around, the odd Curtis Mayfield and Frederick Knight cover thrown in for good measure.

Described as "soul music performed by white country artists", main man Kurt Wagner's enigmatic lyrics are sung in a doleful mumble above slothful, shimmering electric guitar and suitably restrained brass and string sections. The effect, as on N.O., can be quite mesmerising. No wonder Vic Chesnut chose Lambchop as his backing band for his forthcoming album and tour. But Wagner and fellow songwriter F. M. Cornog clearly have a keen sense of the absurd as there's a dark, subtle humour running through much of the album.

NICK KELLY

MUSIC BUSINESS

A record label is born

BLUES ALBUMS

LEE SANKEY is a young British harmonica player in a hurry. His mission is to free the instrument from what he sees as the traditional Chicago and Delta dies that bind much of British blues music and take it into new areas. In the sleeve notes to his self-produced CD My Day Is Just Beginning (Sankey LSCD), available from Tower Records) he says he has tried to approach blues with an open mind.

of Crystal Ball recordings (DJ-CD 55056, 55057 and 55062) all offer a fascinating glimpse of New York's tenement harmonies of the Fifties and Sixties. (Dee-Jay Records, Schallplatten, Postbox: 550269, 22562 Hamburg.)

Much more in the mainstream and a superb primer for anyone who has just got into blues and soul is the Charlie Gillett-compiled And I Need A Shot of Rhythm & Blues (Debutante 555-937-2). Classics such as Otis Redding's Mr Pitiful and Sly and the Family Stone's Family Affair rub shoulders with previously hard to find numbers such as Bobby Parker's killer cut, Watch Your Step, and Mack Rice's original version of Mustang Sally.

JOHN CLARKE

TOP TEN ALBUMS

- 1 (2) Where We Belong - Boyzone (Polydor)
2 (1) Talk on Corners - Corrs (Atlantic)
3 (5) Savage Garden - Savage Garden (Columbia)
4 (14) Life Goes On - Sash! (Mute)
5 (7) Blue - Simply Red (East West)
6 (4) 100% Colombian - Fun Lovin' Criminals (Chrysalis)
7 (3) Payance Fiction - Urkne (Mo'Nique)
8 (6) International Velvet - Catalonia (Glasgow Vibe)
9 (8) Life Thru a Lens - Robbie Williams (Chrysalis)
10 (5) Postcards from Heaven - Lighthouse Family (Wild Card)

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Advertisement for Andy's Records featuring John Hiatt. The ad includes a photo of Hiatt, the text 'THE BEST OF John Hiatt', and promotional text: 'John Hiatt is undoubtedly one of the most highly respected US songwriters of his generation, supplying hit songs for artists such as Bob Dylan, Bonnie Raitt, Linda Ronstadt and Joe Cocker. His own recording career spans over 20 years and 13 albums - 'The Best Of John Hiatt' - a perfect document of his remarkable talent. HEAR IT NOW AT ALL [ANDY'S RECORDS] STORES.... UK'S BEST INDEPENDENT RETAILER 93.94.95.96.97'

In the maverick spirit

To anyone of a glass-is-half-empty mentality, the music industry as we know it is on Death Row. Nothing sounds new; no one goes to gigs; labels are keeling over; and kids would rather operate a PlayStation than a hi-fi. But then there are the glass-is-half-full merchants, for whom the charts are an ever-changing pageant of new talent and record sales are defiantly buoyant.

The true prognosis for a business going through one of its occasional crises of confidence lies somewhere between these two extremes. But as A&R executives kill time while they wait for the next Oasis by signing yet another Identikit cover version, one must ponder the disappearance of the true pop maverick. The sort of mogul, be it Island Records' creator Chris Blackwell at the turn of the 1960s or Rick Rubin with his hip-hop haven at Def Jam in the mid-1980s, who blottoched the rulebook and created his own self-sufficient record republic, before the business was colonised by attorneys.

The wreaths at the graveside of A&M Records, the British division of which went under in June, have already wilted and even the most celebrated nonconformist of the latter-day British industry, Alan McGee of Creation Records, has had to clip his own wings of late, the apparent over-expansion of his label resulting in the laying-off last month of ten of its staff of 35. So it is a brave man who pokes his head above the parapet in 1998 to launch a new record label, especially one that aims to recapture some of that untamed spirit of creativity. Step forward Julian Palmer, who during 12 years with Blackwell's Island became one of Britain's most accomplished practitioners of that strange and inexact acquisitional science known as Artist & Repertoire.

Palmer presided over the creation of Island's respected 4th & Broadway banner, to which he signed such singular talents as Tricky, the Stereo MC's and Mica Paris. It was quite an empire for a London soul boy who started out as an accounts clerk and who only took a first dabble in the A&R game when his bosses were away on holiday. Now he is starting again, with backing from Sony Music's international network, SINE, by creating the Disco Volante label. With offices in London and Los Ange-

Paul Sexton meets the man mad enough to start a record label in the middle of a crisis



New boy on the block: Julian Palmer, head of the Disco Volante label

les, it plans its first releases early in 1999 from the Portland, Oregon, rock band Absinthe, the London singer Santessa and the British pop outfit Darling. As he makes ready, Palmer is only too aware that many a cynical tongue still refers to what he does for a living as Um & Aah. The jaundiced eye sees it as a fellowship of confused sheep with out-of-control chequebooks, all following each other around in desperate, decreasing circles all the way to the deficit sheet and the expensive drug habit. "Marketing is only a dirty word in some quarters, but A&R is a dirty word per se," says Palmer wryly. "Sometimes

it's not always the A&R man's fault; some A&R men sign acts that become successful beyond their control, or are marketed beyond their jurisdiction. They're bastardised by other areas of the record business and the little old A&R man takes the flak."

In 1984, at the age of 21, Palmer was sitting in the club promotions department at Island wondering what an A&R man did, then suddenly found that he was one. "I signed records when people were away on holiday. That's how I signed Somebody Else's Guy by Jocelyn Brown." Taking a tip from the guru of mobile DJs, the late Record Mirror columnist James Hamilton, Palmer called the American telephone number on the label of the import single and secured the British rights to what became one of the most powerful and enduring soul hits of the decade.

"My bosses came back and I said 'I've got some good news and bad news. The good news is we've got a new artist, the bad news is that we've spent money.' "Comparatively, that was a huge step from me, to get the accounts department to write a cheque for \$8,000 and for me to send it, with no experience. I honestly figured I was going to get fired."

"But I said, how bad can it be? I'll just go back to DJ-ing; I earn more money doing that. And I remember getting a £50 bonus for it and a pat on the back when it was a hit. Instead of getting fired, that set the tone for the rest of my career."

As managing director of Disco Volante, Palmer's intentions are to be as musically broad-based as the modern industry will allow. "It's a business, for sure, but it's also entertainment. I love characters. I worked with Blackwell for 12 years, and there are so few maverick-spirited people like him left. "You want to hear somebody who doesn't want to be the new rock'n'roll star. Like Tricky, it took me forever to get a meeting with him, then it took me forever to get him to want to make an album. He wanted to wear make-up and a dress and silver hair, so I saw Bowie in him. "My new band Absinthe sound to me like an amalgamation of Roxy Music and Bowie. They have the essence and grandeur of Japan, and Radiohead's musical intricacy. I love all those things, but I also love funk and hip-hop. I think you can be into everything."

Vertical advertisement on the right edge of the page. It includes the text 'THE TIMES FRIDAY', 'POP FESTIV', 'Mad delights', 'Rhythm', 'Why do we neglect...', 'stars Nigel Williamson', and 'B'. There are also some small images and logos, including one for 'recom'.

Handwritten Arabic text at the bottom center: 'سكزا من الأهل'

POP FESTIVALS: Mad delights in Reading

ARTS

TOMORROW Read Metro for pop listings

Rhythm sings the blues

Thanks, Reading, for the memories

Why do we neglect our R&B stars? Nigel Williamson reports

Back in the 1960s when the likes of John Mayall, Eric Clapton and Peter Green were spearheading the British blues boom...



The gem, fine article: "I don't get this idea about not being authentic," says Des'ree. "In America they had no preconceptions"

It is an attitude which infuriates Hinda Hicks, one of the most promising of the crop of new British R&B performers...

...most of them women. In addition to Hicks, this year has brought chart success for Kensal Green's Shola Ama...

...legged lack of authenticity. "I don't get this idea about not being authentic," she says. "When I first went on tour in America with Seal they had no preconceptions about me..."

...man integrity, and he was among friends at Dingwall's on Monday evening...

...vocal and guitar, economically accompanied by bass and drums. Smith cut a slight but noble figure...

Winnie The Pooh balloons and a free tracheotomy — it was the best British festival of the summer

Well here are two things you don't expect to say about the Reading Festival: the showmanship was exemplary — like watching Elvis in lame, balloon-twirling. And I danced all night.

Foundation are a glorious thing. "This is the true sound of the Union Jack," their lead singer yelps...



CAITLIN MORAN

But here we are on a Friday afternoon, listening to Afghan Whigs groove like Stevie Wonder circa *Hotter Than July*...

It's left to the divine Ms Shirley Manson and Garbage to revive Reading's new Commitment to Starriness...

...White XO has the smoother texture of more production dollars, the soft eloquence of his songs still speaks of an every-

...man integrity, and he was among friends at Dingwall's on Monday evening...

Smooth, stark and noble

LIVE GIG Elliott Smith Dingwall's

...man integrity, and he was among friends at Dingwall's on Monday evening...

...vocal and guitar, economically accompanied by bass and drums. Smith cut a slight but noble figure...

Centre stage

CHRIS POTTER QUARTET Verrigo [Concord Jazz CCD-4843-2] AFTER spending much of his early career in intriguingly varied sideman work...

ERNE WATTS Classic Moods [JVC 9041-2] LIKE Chris Potter, tenor player Ernie Watts was thoroughly established as a sideman with the likes of Buddy Rich and Oliver Nelson...

HMV recommends roots. Mickie Hart - Planet Drum Supralingua. Innette Blue - The Poozies. Pat Gallagher & Goin' Down Shave - TOR. End Of The Summer - Dar Williams. Slow Down - Ker' Mo'. Horistow Grange - Steeleye Span.

Mike Oldfield, that name rings a bell. Tubular Bells III. Whatever you're into, get into WHSmith.

media times

Small but perfectly informed

Cutting off part of Performance channel's audience is cultural vandalism, says Bob Lynton

Critics often deride multi-channel TV as merely providing more of the same and, in some respects, it is difficult to disagree. UK Gold, Granada Plus and Carlton Select are three channels repeating golden-oldie drama and comedy. There are four documentary channels, five children's channels and three 24-hour news channels.

But there are precious few channels such as Performance with unique programming which really extends viewer choice.

Performance caters for the minority of people who enjoy classical music, opera, ballet and jazz. Broadcasting every evening, Performance shows each month more than both BBC channels manage in a year. We have built up a devoted audience which cannot regularly find this kind of entertainment anywhere else. At the moment the channel is available to two million cable households and has almost the same share of its potential audience as BBC Radio 3. Not huge when compared with Radio 1 — or Sky One, for that matter — but that is what one would expect of a minority interest channel.

Cable & Wireless is the country's largest cable operator, accounting for about a third of Performance viewers. After five years, it has now decided

to drop the channel from its line-up to make room for a higher-rating channel. What will this be? Yet another sports or movie channel, or perhaps another reruns channel giving people one more "opportunity to view" well-worn sitcoms?

When Cable & Wireless intimated its plans to drop Performance, we invited viewers to call us with their opinions and more than 6,000 people rang to express support. This is a sizeable number, especially when it takes only a handful of people calling to complain about a programme on terrestrial TV to raise a national controversy. I doubt if there would be many more calls of support for most higher-rating channels. More than 1,000 letters of protest were delivered to C&W last week.

So the question is: how does one value a TV channel? For Cable & Wireless the answer seems to be simple: the total number of viewers attracted — ie, market forces.

But this value system ignores one other important yardstick: audience appreciation which, in my days at the BBC, was considered as important as ratings. Our viewers appreciate and value Performance far more than the viewers of most higher-rating channels. Witness this extract from one of hundreds of viewers' letters (Reg Moon, of Lewisham, in London): "Being house-



Dance away: a third of Performance's audience gets the channel through Cable & Wireless

bound with arthritis and Parkinson's disease, I can no longer go to concerts, opera and the ballet. Performance is the only way I can see the arts."

Since television is our most influential cultural institution, there is also the question of a channel's contribution to our culture. Here again Performance far outscored most higher-rating channels. Witness another viewer's letter (from Vanda Rorbach in Stoke-on-

Trent): "I'm writing to tell you that I'm a 14-year-old girl who before she saw your channel didn't know anything about opera and plays and culture, but now I watch the Performance channel all the time, as I think that it's great." Sadly, Vanda will shortly be denied this opportunity.

Cable & Wireless' widely advertised slogan "What Can We Do For You?" suggests a willingness to listen to its cus-

tomers. We can only hope it means it, so that if enough customers protest, it will restore Performance.

Fortunately there are other cable operators that take the broader view and balance their own interest in profit with their customers' interest in diversity and choice by continuing to offer Performance.

Bob Lynton is general manager of Performance.

Big Ben's bongos at ten are numbered

It's time to start weaning yourself off the bongos of Big Ben at 10 o'clock on ITV because soon they won't be there any more. The plan by the ITV companies to move the landmark news programme, after more than 30 years, may have had the gestation period of an elephant and been subject to more leaks than a colander, but it is going to happen all the same.

Old *News at Ten* hands such as Sandy Gall and Sir Alastair Burnet are against the move and so, more surprisingly, is Gerald Kaufman, chairman of the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee. It is not instantly clear how his attachment to having a fixed time for one news bulletin on one channel fits his vision of communication convergence and unlimited television choice in future.

Tony Blair has let it be known that he is against the move, in line with the former Prime Minister John Major and the late John Smith, who both wrote letters of concern when ITV hungled an attempt to move the programme in 1993. This time, at least so far, there is no sign of opposition from the Archbishop of Canterbury or Buckingham Palace, and the reaction of the Independent Television Commission, which will take the decision, and indeed that of ITN itself, seems muted.

It is all very different from last time when the then ITC chairman, Sir George Russell, made clear that such a move would happen over his dead body and senior ITN executives stirred up a political hornet's nest.

Apart from sentiment there are some serious arguments for keeping *News at Ten* and Trevor McDonald exactly where they are. It would maintain the tradition on British television that serious news bulletins are carried in the heart of prime time and not shuffled off to the margins by non-stop entertainment. *News at Ten* also provides competition for the BBC, which would otherwise have the middle of the evening to itself and, critics would argue, would become even more smug and complacent. Politicians also love the flagship ITN programme because it provides such an excellent live shop window for the more dramatic moments of their trade. Governments have indeed fallen as a result of divisions carried live on *News at Ten*.

Against that, much has changed in the five years since ITV began plotting against the news bulletin that sits inconveniently astride

its scheduling of feature films and dramas. In that time, more than 30 per cent of UK homes have acquired multi-channel television, and from this autumn no fewer than ten news and documentary channels will be available from digital including three 24-hour television news channels — Sky, CNN and BBC News 24.

The most compelling argument for change is that ITV, which is facing ever-increasing competition, must be allowed to revamp its schedule, which is almost impossible with *News at Ten* in its present position. The evidence of impending crisis at ITV is compelling. Between 1994 and 1997 ITV's peak-time audience declined from 44.3 per cent to 38.3 per cent. But more precisely, in the first five months of this year ITV suffered a 27 per cent drop in its audience at 10pm, as other broadcasters screened comedies and popular entertainment to target what they see as a weak spot in the ITV schedule.

There is also some evidence that viewers might like their main evening news at 6.30pm so that they can get the unpleasantness of the real world out of the way before settling down to be entertained. If, as seems likely, the ITC will bow to commercial pressures and allow the change, the commission must insist that the ITV companies do carry out their accompanying promises.

The creation of a new half-hour news programme at 11pm is a chance to have a more serious bulletin that carries comprehensive political, business and financial news, including the closing of the working day in the US.

If it is good, it will attract those, such as businessmen and journalists, who will see Trevor McDonald at 6.30pm only if they are at home ill. The ITC must insist that the 11pm is properly funded and is not just a sop. Likewise, the promise to have one-minute bulletins between 6.30pm and 11pm should be a regular commitment. And the ITC should insist that on days of major news stories, such as the Oranga bombing, ITV interrupts its entertainment to run special news bulletins that run well beyond a minute.

With a tear in the eye we should be prepared to say goodbye to *News at Ten* but the ITV companies should not get off scot-free, and their commitment to providing quality news throughout the day should be carefully monitored. Reggie Bosanquet, Sir Alastair Burnet and Sandy Gall deserve no less.



Bob Lynton

MEDIA & MARKETING

Lead the way

Channel 4 International Head of Co-Productions/Marketing Manager

Channel 4 International (C4I) is a commercial subsidiary of Channel 4 Television, and is responsible for all aspects of programme rights exploitation including co-productions, co-finance, pre-sales and distribution. C4I's programming includes that from the best producers in Britain and its catalogue is one of the largest in the country. We are now seeking to fill the following newly created senior roles to strengthen the existing team and to support the Company's strategic objectives. Both roles report to the Managing Director, Channel 4 International.

Head of Co-Productions

You will be responsible for overseeing the Channel's co-production and co-finance activities with clients in the USA and around the world. Working alongside Channel 4's commissioning editors, producers and international partners, you will be responsible for identifying programming that is suitable for co-production/co-finance and for marketing and positioning those programmes in overseas markets. As part of C4I's new strategy, you will also oversee the creative aspects of any non Channel 4 programming that the company is distributing.

You will have at least five years' experience working in a production end/or broadcast environment outside the UK. You will have experience in both selling co-production projects to international partners and producing and/or commissioning programmes that are financed through co-production. You will also have a thorough understanding of the international broadcast market and where the major opportunities lie for co-production projects.

Additionally, you will have a strong interest in television programmes and the creative process; an understanding of the different budgeting and financing procedures in major international markets; a proven track record in finding creative solutions to complex problems; excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to work as part of a team.

Experience in factual programming would be highly desirable as would a good understanding of the Channel 4 remit and programming output, and extensive production and broadcast contracts in Europe and America.

Ref: BMC/01/T.

Closing date for applications: 5th October 1998.

Marketing Manager

A new department is now being formed to oversee all aspects of the Company's marketing and servicing functions.

You will be responsible for marketing, promoting and servicing the Company's programme distribution and co-production activities. Working with a small team of experienced industry professionals, you will be in charge of an extensive re-launch plan scheduled for 1999. This will involve the creation of an integrated marketing strategy that positions C4I and its services with its core clients in the form of independent producers and international buyers. You will also be responsible for spearheading the division's Internet strategy.

You will have at least five years' experience in a marketing environment. You will have experience in identifying marketing needs of businesses and drawing up long-term strategies that address those needs. You will have hands-on marketing experience in print and/or direct mail media and you will also have experience in the use of focus groups and other research tools required for qualitative analysis. You will have worked with small companies and/or start-ups and will have experience in marketing to mass market consumers as well as smaller business to business sectors.

Additionally, you will have some experience in an audiovisual sector such as broadcast marketing, video marketing or publishing, a strong interest in television programmes and the television industry as a whole, a proven track record in finding creative solutions to complex problems, excellent interpersonal skills and strong contacts in the marketing profession.

Ref: BMC/02/T.

Closing date for applications: 9th September 1998.

Please note interviews for this post will be held 16th and 17th September 1998.

Please send all applications to: The Personnel Department, Channel 4 Television, 124 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2TX. Remember to quote the relevant reference on all correspondence.



SALES AND MARKETING DIRECTOR

Rapid growth media products sales

c £40,000, plus bonus, plus car

North East

This exponentially growing organisation is the world leader in the creation, design and marketing of interactive game products, which are supplied to a variety of market sectors, including broadcast media, publicity media, retail, consumer goods and the worldwide web. Within 3 years of start-up, this embryonic company now occupies the Number 1 world market position in this highly specialised niche, and is now targeting a 3-fold increase in sales over the next 3 year period.

This new position will work very closely with the Managing Director in the opening up of new business opportunities, on a global basis, in this exciting arena. Candidates will be proven business development professionals who have operated in a combined sales/marketing capacity at senior

level, probably with an advertising agency, promotions or PR group, and who have sold into the media sectors. Essential personal qualities are first class interpersonal and communication skills, a very high level of self-discipline, and the tenacity and ambition to grow with this very exciting company.

Please reply in confidence, enclosing your CV and current salary details, quoting Ref: ST6042, to Keith Thompson, Howgate Sable, 2 Amethyst Road, The Newcastle Business Park, Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 7YL.

Tel: 0191-272 1000. Fax: 0191-272 1111.

e-mail: kthompson@howgate-sable.co.uk

Internet: http://www.howgate-sable.co.uk

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Reporting to the Managing Director, you will have total responsibility for the full marketing mix across four trading divisions. Managing a large team, your brief will be to pull together a robust strategy covering brands, private label and importantly, the innovation process. Additionally, you will be expected to make a significant contribution to the business as a whole.

This is not a role for the faint-hearted. You will be a seasoned blue-chip FMCG marketer, with the ambition and ability to move into general management in the future. With an interest in food, you will understand how brands and private labels can co-exist to deliver competitive advantage. A strong team orientation with a passion to succeed is essential, as is the willingness to lock into and live by the values of the business.

Please reply in confidence, enclosing your CV and current salary details, quoting Ref: ST10041, to Ian Gray, Howgate Sable, 35 Curzon Street, London W1Y 7AE. Tel: 0171-495 1234. Fax: 0171-495 1700.

e-mail: london@howgate-sable.co.uk

Internet: http://www.howgate-sable.co.uk

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THE TIMES FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 4 1998

In the second of media careers... Leapman

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Making your name in print

In the second of his guides to a media career, Michael Leapman looks at newspapers

Asked in opinion polls about how much we admire various professions, newspaper journalists consistently lurk near the bottom of the league, close to politicians and prostitutes. Yet, paradoxically, more and more young people compete every year for the privilege of standing forlornly in the rain outside the house of a reluctant newsmaker, asking embarrassing questions and then — but only if they get really lucky — shouting: "Hold the front page!"

First degrees in journalism, usually combining practical training with a more academic subject, such as English or social science. About 30 per cent of new journalists still join without any formal qualifications and receive training on the job, often including part-time attendance at a course. Few papers will offer jobs to potential journalists who do not have at least two A levels.

HOW

How do I start looking for a course? For a list of undergraduate courses, get *A Student's Guide to Entry to Media Studies*, published by UCAS (01242 222444), at £10. The NCTJ has a list of approved pre-entry courses, but some good colleges and universities do not seek accreditation from the council. Ask three principal questions before deciding on a course. Is there a properly equipped newsroom with up-to-date computers, and how much access do students get to it? Do the tutors have recent newspaper experience? And what is the success rate of students getting jobs on papers after completing the course?

Journalists contribute to their own poor image. In 1969 Nick Tomalin (who was later killed covering a war) wrote that the only qualities needed for success in the job are "ruthless cunning, a plausible manner and a little literary ability". A less cynical view comes from the National Council for the Training of Journalists in a leaflet for youngsters considering career options. It lists some of the necessary attributes as an interest in current affairs and people, clear and grammatical writing, willingness to accept irregular hours and the pressure of deadlines and — most importantly — determination and persistence. (For a copy of the leaflet, ring the NCTJ on 01279 43009, or visit its website at www.journalists.org.uk/nctj/.)

The job has become more popular, so the barriers have risen. Forty years ago, when some of today's senior journalists began their careers, the classic way in was to leave school at 16 or 18, join a small local paper, and train on the job. Those with a university degree were in a substantial minority.

Today, an estimated 60 per cent of new journalists are graduates. Most, graduates or not, take some kind of diploma training course, lasting between 16 weeks and a full academic year, before getting their first newspaper post.

A growing number of universities and colleges offer

courses invariably include shorthand, with students aiming at a minimum 100 words a minute. Journalists also need a basic knowledge of the law and of how local and national government work. These basic skills are essential whether you plan to join a mass-market tabloid paper or a serious broadsheet.

Three postgraduate courses which have good reputations are at City University in London (0171-477 8000), University of Wales at Cardiff (01222 874786), and the University of Central Lancashire at Preston (01772 201201). All are heavily oversubscribed. If you are accepted, expect to pay more than £3,000 for a full year's course.

The Trinity Group, which has 124 regional newspapers, runs two 16-week courses a



Journalists have probably shouted "Hold the front page" more in films than in newspaper offices, but for would-be reporters there is always the chance that their time will come

year in Newcastle, starting in January and August, with students having some on-the-job training at the *Chronicle* and *Journal*. Half the places go to trainees from the group but ten are reserved every year for individual applicants, at £2,999. Ring 0191-201 6043 or visit Trinity's website at www.trinity-training.co.uk.

If I want to apply for a post-graduate course, does my degree subject matter? Not much, although useful subjects include a foreign language (especially something exotic, like Chinese), physics, mathematics, history and politics.

"The subject is not the most important thing I look at," says Linda Christmas, who runs the journalism course at City. "It's mainly a matter of attitude. You can't be a journalist unless you have a high en-

ergy level and tremendous enthusiasm."

How do I apply direct to a newspaper?

Although many regional papers now belong to large groups, most editors do their own recruiting. A list of British newspapers, with phone numbers and names of senior executives, is published annually in *Willings Press Guide*, which is held by many public libraries.

A less comprehensive list is in the *Writers' and Artists' Year Book*, published by Black at £11.99.

If invited for an interview, read several copies of the newspaper thoroughly beforehand, because you will be tested on your knowledge of it. Examples of published work are helpful — from your school or college magazine or elsewhere. The *Writers' and Ar-*

ists' Year Book has guidelines on what kind of freelance material various publications are looking for.

Is it worth applying to a national paper?

Nationals rarely employ inexperienced people, but some broadsheets take a handful of high-flyers straight from university on two-year training schemes. Watch for advertisements.

Some national papers offer unpaid work experience. The *Times* may have half a dozen young interns at any one time, perhaps during university vacations or in their gap year after A levels.

Most stay less than a month but they get to know how a newspaper office works. Equally important, the experience may help some to decide whether journalism is, after all, really for them.

HOW THEY MADE IT TO THE TOP

From scientist to Editor

Sue Douglas, 41, the former Editor of the *Sunday Express*



After leaving Southampton University in 1978, where she gained a first-class degree in biochemistry, Ms Douglas started to think she might want to be a journalist. "As a biochemist, I had learnt the clarity and precision of thought that is needed to explain difficult concepts to readers," she says. After a brief spell with a management consultancy, she joined a specialist medical journal and in 1980 went to spend a year in South Africa, where she got a job on the *Rand Daily Mail*. "I exaggerated my qualifications," she now admits. "I kept telling them my cuttings were in the post."

then the *Daily Mail*. The launch of *The Mail on Sunday* in 1982 gave her a foothold on the ladder of success. She began as health correspondent but by the time she left six years later she was an associate editor. Then she moved over to the *Daily Mail* as assistant editor, responsible for the features pages. In 1991 she went to *The Sunday Times*, where she rose to deputy editor before being made Editor of the *Sunday Express* in 1995 — one of the first female editors of a national newspaper. She left when the paper was merged with the *Daily Express* into a single editorial operation, and has since been a consultant editor for *The European* and *The Scotsman*. Her philosophy? "Aim high. Be determined. Editing a national paper is a challenge but it's also great fun."

Returning to London, she did casual stints as a reporter on the *News of the World* and

er writer and also wrote bylined commentaries for the *Open* page. By 1995 he had been promoted to assistant editor.

That year he was recruited by *The Sunday Telegraph* as deputy editor of its Comment pages, with a weekly political column. At the beginning of this year he was made deputy editor.

He has this advice to people looking for that first job: "Always try to have something to say at interviews, other than: 'It's a good writer.' In my interview for *The Times* traineeship I was able to talk about what I'd done at *Index on Censorship*. I wasn't discussing abstractions."



Achieving a first in history in 1989, Mr d'Ancona spent a further year in Oxford as a Fellow of All Souls, undecided between an academic and a journalistic career. Then, in 1991, he began unpaid work for *Index on Censorship*, a magazine that supports oppressed and silenced people across the globe. His ten months there left him convinced that journalism was for him, and he has never regretted the choice. "It's a wonderful job — I was able to talk about what I'd done at *Index on Censorship*. I wasn't discussing abstractions."

So Richard Flintham and Andy Macleod's record has justifiedly made them the hottest creative team in London over the past three years. Having been lured to BMP DDB from Duckworth Finn Grubb Waters, where they worked on the Pizza Hut "bit the hut" campaign among others, they have been lured for their "obsession" work for Volkswagen

Passat, their Sony campaigns, Walker's Dorito screen and "use your vote" for the Ministry of Sound.

They have helped to make BMP DDB's creative output the best regarded of London's larger agencies. So it was inevitable that they would succumb to the challenge of a start-up. However, they have proved smart in their choice of new partner. They are to launch the London office of US agency Fallon McElligott, which is to open in London.

With only the Lee jeans account, they will find life much tougher. But most observers feel they will succeed. It's a measure of the esteem with which they are regarded that when they resigned BMP's creative director, Larry Barker, was effusive in his praise. Fallon McElligott will be worth watching.

Stefano Hatfield is editor of *Communication*

The way the industry works

Britain has 32 national daily and Sunday papers, 14 regional dailies (mostly evenings) and more than 2,000 weeklies, both free and paid. Whether mass-market tabloids or serious broadsheets they all operate in broadly similar ways, although the precise procedures vary according to the paper's frequency and agenda.

There are three distinct editorial processes. The first involves executives who generate ideas, commission, re-write if necessary and have overall control of pages. Then writers, reporters and photographers gather the information and write the stories. The production process then begins with designers who lay out pages and sub-editors who prepare the stories, check them and cut where necessary, and write headlines.

The introduction of computers has blurred the distinction between the processes. Today writers, if working from the office, may be asked to fit the story into the allotted space — and even write the headline. But the sub is still responsible for making sure that the page appears as planned.

Journalists have traditionally chosen between being writers or subs early in

their careers, and there is surprisingly little cross-over between the two. Subs (and some reporters) are often employed on casual shifts and offered permanent jobs if they show promise.

Reporters or feature writers working away from the office usually send their copy via laptop computers. The copy is input directly into the newspaper's system, or sent by e-mail. But the older system of telephoning stories to a team of copy-takers is not yet obsolete.

On a daily paper the news editor, in charge of the news desk, is in the office early to check news agency wire services, the basic source of developing news. Reporters are assigned to follow up promising stories and specialist and foreign correspondents are asked whether they have anything to offer.

The editor calls a conference of key editorial executives mid-morning to plan the next day's paper. The news editor outlines the news schedule so far.

Ideas for features and leaders (editorials) are discussed.

Features come in two kinds. Commissioned on topical issues is often commissioned only hours before publication, while interviews with celebrities, investigations or coverage of lifestyle issues are prepared in advance.

A shorter conference later in the day reviews progress and decides on the probable main story (the "splash"). A night editor comes in during the afternoon and stays until after midnight to supervise changes to late editions.

Who writes what?

Specialists: After a spell as a general reporter you may be asked to specialise in a specific area — perhaps politics, fashion, education, defence or business. You will be expected to develop contacts and initiate exclusive stories. The political correspondents spend most of their time in Parliament.

Sports: A self-contained part of the paper. Sports writers must be genuinely

enthusiastic and usually need a colourful writing style.

Foreign: Overseas correspondents enjoy high prestige but are expensive to maintain and the demands on them are great. Resident correspondents need command of the local language, an ability to work alone and cultivate contacts — and not to mind being on a constant call.

Critics: Unlimited free tickets for movies, plays and concerts — sounds great but it is a challenge to find something interesting to write about all of them. TV critics need the rare ability to write entertainingly and perceptively day in, day out.

Columnists: Holding down a regular column is harder than it looks. It is not just a question of speaking your mind eloquently on issues of the day but of developing an appealing persona and a consistent tone of voice.

Feature writers: The late Sir David English used to say he had known only four people who could do news and features equally well. Feature writing is a specialised skill, which involves examining issues or interviewing people in more depth.

NEXT WEEK: WORKING IN RADIO

THIS week a TV star was born. Martin Skinner owns his own business and in his words "gives it 110 per cent effort", and expects his staff to do the same. He believes in "commitment, drive and determination" and feels he is "harsh, but fair", with a bark little bit worse than his bite. Martin is one of those businessmen for whom problems are just opportunities. He is struggling to come to terms with the decline of Thatcherite values: "A strange thing in this country, if you've got ambition people think you're weird." Nevertheless, he convinces himself that he's not work-obsessed. "Let's face it,

Slick euro star solves the ad brief from hell

if you're not enjoying it, there's no point doing it." He delivers all his homilies while stooping around the office screaming in the face of his employees. What agitates Martin, however, is the approach of the euro currency. That's because Martin's not a real-life boss from ITV's latest docu-soap, *Britain's Worst Bosses*, but the star of the Treasury's major new ad campaign aimed at convincing us to take the euro seriously. This must have been the advertising brief from hell for the TBWA agency: persuade the public to take the euro seriously despite the Government doing the opposite by declining to join in when it launches on January 1, 1999. The advertising had to convey the launch date and the serious-



ness of its impact, but also sensitive to resistance to the idea, and the fact that we won't be one of the 11 countries involved.

TBWA's solution was to anticipate all our negative reactions to the euro — from antagonism to apathy. So Martin lambasts his staff when they confess their ignorance. "There's 11 countries round Europe gonna be in it," he shrieks. "We're not one of them, but it doesn't mean we

don't have to be ready." The ads appear to be a result of market research among small and medium-sized businesses that the Treasury undertook in May. This found that only 11 per cent knew the single currency began on January 1, 1999, only 5 per cent had done anything to prepare for it, 17 per cent admitted they didn't know what impact it would have on business, and 46 per cent thought it would have no impact because they worked

for a UK-based company. The campaign shows how slick the Government (through its Central Office of Information) has become at managing its marketing. The advertising directs people towards a 1.6 million letter mailbox to be sent out to small and medium-sized enterprises with more information. It's very fresh in tone — not what you might expect from the Treasury. The writing and direction are tight, and the script even manages to get the pro-European lobby's retaliation in first.

"Like it or not, the euro is happening over there. We've got to be ready for it over here," says Martin. The commercials hinge on his performance. This boss is more convincing than many of the real-life bosses earlier in the week.

In buying the ads, Gordon Brown has shown another strength to his bow.

MANY are the big names in advertising who have built a lucrative career on the back of one famous ad. Yet it's not that surprising considering how difficult it is today to get work through all the agency and client research obstacles, and on to air or into print.

So Richard Flintham and Andy Macleod's record has justifiedly made them the hottest creative team in London over the past three years. Having been lured to BMP DDB from Duckworth Finn Grubb Waters, where they worked on the Pizza Hut "bit the hut" campaign among others, they have been lured for their "obsession" work for Volkswagen

Passat, their Sony campaigns, Walker's Dorito screen and "use your vote" for the Ministry of Sound.

They have helped to make BMP DDB's creative output the best regarded of London's larger agencies. So it was inevitable that they would succumb to the challenge of a start-up. However, they have proved smart in their choice of new partner. They are to launch the London office of US agency Fallon McElligott, which is to open in London.

With only the Lee jeans account, they will find life much tougher. But most observers feel they will succeed. It's a measure of the esteem with which they are regarded that when they resigned BMP's creative director, Larry Barker, was effusive in his praise. Fallon McElligott will be worth watching.

Stefano Hatfield is editor of *Communication*



Bravura performance: Martin Skinner in euro boss role

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FOR A LEVEL RETAKES SEE PAGE 44

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POSTS



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For informal enquiries please contact Prof Mansoor Sarhad, Head of Department (Tel: 01895 203300, E-mail: mansoor.sarhad@brunel.ac.uk.) Closing date for applications is 25th September 1998.

Further particulars can be obtained from Personnel and Staff Development Department, Brunel University, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3PH Tel. 01895 812304 (24 hour answerphone) quoting reference 5763.

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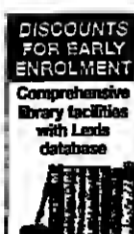
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The College regards a Senior Research Fellowship as a being of comparable academic standing to an Oxford University Professorship, and applicants are expected to have a correspondingly distinguished record of achievement in research.

Senior Research Fellowships are normally held until retirement age (subject to renewal by the College every seven years and the requirements of the Education Reform Act, 1998).

Further particulars, including details of emoluments and terms of appointment, application forms, and copies of a memorandum for referees may be obtained from the Warden's Secretary, All Souls College, Oxford OX1 4AL. Applications, on the application form, should reach the Warden not later than 18th September 1998 (the envelope containing the application to be marked "Senior Research Fellowship"). Applicants are asked to ensure that references, from not more than three referees, also reach the Warden by 18th September 1998.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Professorship of Paediatrics

The Board of Electors to the (second) Professorship of Paediatrics invite applications from persons whose work falls within the field of paediatric cancer, neurosciences, or diabetes and obesity for this Professorship which will be newly established from 1 October 1998. The appointment will be subject to the Statutes and Ordinances of the University.

The annual pensionable stipend for a Professor with clinical responsibility is £57,800 (£59,040 from 1 December 1998).

Candidates for the Professorship should send a copy of their application, marked 'Confidential', together with the names of two referees, to the Secretary General of the Faculties, from whom further information regarding the Professorship is available, at the General Board Office, The Old Schools, Cambridge CB2 1TT, so as to reach him not later than Monday, 19 October 1998.

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THE TIMES EDUCATION

The rites of reading

Can the introduction of literacy hour in schools really work, asks David Tytler

From this month, lessons will be revolutionised in all English primary schools when a literacy hour is introduced. The lessons in reading and writing will be taught, in a strict format laid down by the Department for Education and Employment, in an effort to improve the poor literacy skills of primary school pupils. David Blunkett, the Secretary of State, expects the literacy hour to improve standards and has found £59 million in back his plans. "The Government has set clear literacy and numeracy targets for 2002. We are determined to see a significant improvement in the unacceptably low achievement of 11-year-olds in the 3Rs."

The review of the primary curriculum was Mr Blunkett's first step in the back-to-basics revolution. There will be less time to teach a range of other subjects, such as history, art, geography, design technology and music. But though all subjects will still be mandatory and schools are required to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, they no longer have to cover all aspects of every subject as dictated by the original national curriculum. Critics of the new arrangements believe that pupils will receive a very limited education.

Until now primary schools have argued, with some justification, that the most creative and exciting writing was to be found in subjects such as history, geography and religious education. From this month inspectors will be judging the literacy skills displayed by pupils in these subjects. Mr Blunkett will have none of it. "For too long," he says, "too many primary school teachers have been prevented from giving literacy and numeracy the attention they deserve because the national curriculum has lacked a very clear focus on the basics that are crucial in primary education. As a result, literacy and numeracy have been too often subordinated to other subjects."

The literacy hour will follow next September, but the detailed literacy plans leave little leeway for teachers. Each lesson consists of:

- A 15-minute introductory whole-class session and a further 15 minutes on learning new words.
- Twenty minutes of group and independent work during which the teacher works with at least one ability group each day in reading or writing.
- A final ten minutes for the whole class to review and reflect on what they have learnt.

and present their own work to the class. Mr Blunkett has insisted that the literacy hour is not compulsory. Writing to local education authorities earlier this year he said: "Although the national literacy strategy is not a statutory framework there is a clear expectation that schools will adopt it. If a school chooses not to do so there should be a close consultation with the local education authority on the principle that the onus is upon the school to opt out, not to opt in. The LEA, in advising schools, should make a negotiated judgment about whether or not the school should be involved."

This judgment should be based on whether standards are high enough and likely to meet the targets set for 80 per cent of 11-year-olds to achieve the national average as defined in the national curriculum by 2002, whether the school's framework for teaching English is as detailed as that for the literacy hour, and whether it applies to the whole school. The literacy hour is based on the findings of the national literacy project. It identified three factors that improve standards of literacy: the quality of teaching; the management of literacy across the school; and parental involvement.

Literacy lessons throughout England will be based on the Framework for Teaching, which sets out precise teaching objectives for every term and every year of primary school, giving detailed guidance on how to teach phonics, spelling and grammar. The routine starts when children enrol in school reception classes. By the end of the year they will be expected to read on sight a range of familiar words, for example, names, captions, labels, words from favourite books and a list of 45 high-frequency words. Teaching will have to be precise and pupils must have a regular assessment so that teachers actually know what they can do.

There will also be an implication for staffing. In a class of 30, with say five or six groups working independently, with only one able to have the undivided attention of the teacher, how are the others to be supervised? There will, therefore, be an increased need for other adults in the classroom, either parents who have been given some training, or classroom assistants conversant with the literacy programme. They will have to work under the guidance of the teacher who will provide detailed planning on a daily basis to meet a weekly target. During the summer term, training courses were arranged for head teachers, literacy co-ordinators and a nominated governor. School inspectors have also been given a day's training on how to inspect literacy. If the teacher follows the guidelines and teaches them effectively, that will be considered to be at least a very good lesson. The literacy hour is, therefore, likely to show a considerable improvement in the teaching of English in primary schools linked to higher standards.

If this does not happen, then Mr Blunkett is certain to face criticism from teachers and politicians. He has set ambitious and measurable targets, largely dependent on a strategy devised and imposed from the centre on a profession that does not easily take to being told what to do. He is playing for high stakes, and cannot afford to fail.



A head start: pupils will need to read on sight names, captions, labels and 45 high-frequency words

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THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

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The sponsorship game

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Racing to win sponsorship: your local library can help to give you a jump start

The obvious carrots of sponsorship are being given money while at university, paid holidays, management training and practical work placements. A recent survey showed that salaries offered to sponsored students when they graduate are about £500 above average. The drawbacks are being tied to one firm, less holiday time and "strings attached". The articles in the Springboard booklet are useful, but of the 50 or so firms featured, most are to do with engineering or construction. If you're studying ancient history, or any arts subject, the listed options can be counted on one hand. Arthur Andersen has a reputation as one of the most generous providers of "all-comer" sponsorship. Trainees have a pre-emptive 35-week year, blending financial and business training with work experience, good financial support while at university, paid vacation work and the potential offer of a full-time job as a chartered accountant. You do, however, need A and B grades, preferably with mathematics, and an A at GCSE maths is mandatory. Big firms such as British Aerospace, Ford and John Laing predominate but there are also smaller companies like Edwards High Vacuum. GCHQ Intelligence has about 20 places a year for electronics/electrical engineering and computer science and the Services, though offering excellent financial support, want a firm post-graduate commitment. The average sponsorship — and some do not cover the entire degree course — is estimated at about £1,400 a year and payment for holiday work comes out at about £160 a week. Other possibilities include the Year in Industry scheme, which involves a year's paid work with training and the possibility

of future sponsorship from an employer; graduate holiday placements such as those offered by Barclays Bank; bursaries offered to students already on degree courses, and usually advertised in individual departments or the university careers office; and scholarships. Warwick, for example, has music scholarships for students of all disciplines and Liverpool has 15 year given entrance scholarships up to £1,000 for engineers.

Springboard: Sponsorship for Students (Hobsons, £8.95). Students' Money Matters (Trotman, £7.95). Useful addresses: Institution of Mechanical Engineers, Northgate Avenue, Bury St Edmunds IP32 6BN (01284 763277). The Year in Industry National Director, University of Manchester, Simon Building, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL (0161-275 4396).

DAVID THOMAS

Is Mr Blunkett ready to be named and shamed?

For millions of people in Britain, this week marks the start of a new year. Teachers naturally start afresh in September, but many others map out their year from the end of their summer holidays, whatever their diaries might say.

Politicians fall into this group, and none will have his goals set more clearly than David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary. As the electorate was constantly reminded last year, education was a key part of the Labour manifesto, and Mr Blunkett has chosen to define success or failure in highly visible terms. Within a few months, there will be targets for everything from the reading standards of 11-year-olds to the truancy rate of teenagers. Although in most cases judgment day is safely into the next Parliament, it will be embarrassingly obvious at the next election if one or more goals is not going to be met. This is the year in which Mr Blunkett has set a climate which ensures that this is not the case.

The standards "crusade", as ministers like to call it, has become a highly personal one since the summer reshuffle which took Stephen Byers to the Treasury. During the Government's first year, Mr Byers played the "hard man" of the ministerial team, leaving a more measured role for Mr Blunkett. The pair were the very embodiment of Labour's promised combination of pressure and support.

Mr Byers took the lead on initiatives such as the "naming and shaming" of failing schools and was seen as close to Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools and *habeas corpus* of the teaching profession. When education action zones were announced, for example, Mr Blunkett could emphasise the positive impact on schools, leaving Mr Byers to spell out the threat to local authorities. The arrangement worked well

for both men. Hawkish commentators could attribute measures they liked to Mr Byers, blaming Mr Blunkett for anything smacking of "old Labour". Since the latter generally appealed to teachers, that allowed Mr Blunkett to retain credibility in schools despite persevering with some of the Conservatives' most unpopular policies.

All that will have to stop now. Estelle Morris, Mr Byers's successor, won just praise and promotion for her performance as his junior minister, but would not be convincing as the driving force behind the department. In future Mr Blunkett will have to take all the blame as well as the credit. That will make it twice as hard to carry off this year's key balancing act: keeping the pressure on schools to achieve the improvements the Government seeks without losing the support of the teaching profession.

Recruitment and retention figures for teaching make increasingly depressing reading. And although it is easy to overstate the low morale of the profession when the unions are the main conduit, there is no doubt that many teachers feel let down over pay and still the object of unjustified criticism. Mr Blunkett's first test will be to convince enough of the profession that they could benefit from performance-related pay. This week's poll by the National Union of Teachers showed predictable opposition, which will doubtless intensify when the union holds its special conference on pay in three weeks' time.

Perhaps the most revealing insight into Mr Blunkett's intentions will be his decision on the reappointment of Mr Woodhead, whose contract is due for renewal next year. Nothing would delight the teaching profession more than a new chief inspector, and nothing could do more to confirm the commentators' view of Mr Blunkett as an unreconstructed municipal Socialist in new Labour clothing.



John O'Leary

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ICE HOCKEY

Franchise holds key to future

BY NORMAN DE MESQUITA

BRITISH ice hockey stands at the crossroads and the season which starts this weekend is likely to determine whether the sport is to progress in this country or forever remain an esoteric entertainment for a few aficionados.

After a lapse of five years, the principal competition has a sponsor, Sekonda, and professional ice hockey returns to the capital after a multimillion-pound refurbishment of the London Arena, which will be home for the London Knights. The team is owned by the Los Angeles Kings, of the National Hockey League (NHL), and will probably be used by the American parent club as a means of vetting young European players thought to have a future in the NHL.

The key to the future of British ice hockey lies with the London franchise and it is essential that it does well. With the formation of the Continental Cup, there will be four Sekonda Superleague clubs competing in Europe this season: Ayr Scottish Eagles and Manchester Storm in the European League; Cardiff Devils and Sheffield Steelers in the new competition.

Manchester's fine showing in last season's European League was an indication of how the standard of the Superleague has improved and there is no doubt that the British game is attracting a higher standard of player.

Unfortunately, there is still a reluctance on the part of Superleague clubs to encourage British-born players and the national team is dominated by "dual-nationals", most of whom are veterans. For too many years, little regard has been paid to the long-term future of the sport, at club and international level, and this needs to be addressed quickly.

Importing players is an expensive business and all eight Superleague teams find it difficult to break even. In Newcastle, after a disappointing season both on and off the ice, the Cobras seemed likely to follow Basingstoke Bison into oblivion. The League stepped in and took over the club, installing Alex Dampier as coach and Mike O'Connor as manager. Dampier has a long and successful record while O'Connor has strong North East connections, having played with distinction for Durham Wasps.

The way in which Sir John Hall took over the Durham team and moved it to Newcastle caused many Wasps followers to desert the sport. Then Whitley Warriors were evicted from the Newcastle Arena after one season and more North Eastern fans were antagonised. The Dampier and O'Connor connection, some aggressive marketing and a change of name to the Newcastle Riverkings, should see this franchise improve in every respect.

Ayr won everything last season and, as they have made few changes, should be there or thereabouts again. A key player for them was Rob Dopson, their goaltender. He is now in Japan but his replacement has an excellent pedigree: Vincent Riendeau played nearly 200 games in the NHL for Montreal, St Louis, Detroit and Boston.

Goaltending is important for any team and it is significant that Manchester Storm have replaced one former NHL goaltender (Jim Hrivnak) with another, Frank Pietrangola, who spent seven years at the top level with Pittsburgh and Hartford. Cardiff Devils welcome back Stevie Lyle, who returns after a disappointing attempt to break into the North American game.



Power generation: from the left, Pinsent, Foster, Redgrave and Cracknell will be seeking a smooth passage towards the world title in Cologne

Pulling alongside the heavyweights

Mike Rosewell on how a young rower became a key part of the Great Britain four pursuing a world title

When the world championships start in Cologne on Sunday, James Cracknell, 26, will be trying for his second gold medal in two years but, in spite of this, he is still "the other one" in the Great Britain coxless four.

He sits at bow behind Steve Redgrave and Matthew Pinsent, both with hats of Olympic and world titles, and the ebullient Tim Foster, with world gold and silvers and an Olympic bronze.

When, in the spring of last year, Jürgen Gröbler, the coach, was looking for two men to go with Redgrave and Pinsent in a four, Cracknell was the first to be taken aside and told "James, you are in it for now". One World Cup and one world championship win later, Cracknell is still there.

Cracknell did a long apprenticeship before that day in 1997. He won a world junior gold in 1990. His crew-mates of that year tended to achieve fame quicker. Greg Searle winning a medal every year since 1991, including Olympic gold and bronze, and Nick Clarry and Peter Bridge hitting the headlines in Boat Race crews and at Henley. Cracknell toiled less publicly. He admitted the rowing

slipped a little while he was studying for a teaching qualification at Reading, but he made the senior team in 1991. Olympic years started badly with a shoulder injury sustained playing rugby and he failed to gain selection. "I was asked to be spare man, but I thought I'd been unfairly treated and refused. I was told that if I didn't go I'd never row for Britain again," he said.

He did, though, gaining a place in the eight in 1993 and

1994, but, with the Atlanta Olympics in mind, he spent the next two years in a double scull with Bobby Thatcher. The dream of selection was achieved before, on the opening day, Cracknell went down with a virus and two years' work evaporated. "I thought of giving up but decided to give it six months to try for the four. It worked."

Clearly, "the other one" has

learnt from his first year in the top boat. At 15st, he has come out top in the ergometer tests of the crew this year. Foster is Cracknell's room-mate on training camps — "it's good for me since Tim is very relaxed, the opposite to me."

Cracknell describes Redgrave as "totally focused, you can see the change in him as the championships approach". As for the stroke, Pinsent, "he is amazing in the way he raises his game. At Henley against the Australians he brought us to another level".

He finds it surprising that the four have never had an argument. "No one has got an ego problem. We have all got faith that the four of us are the best people. That throws confrontation out of the window. The total professionalism of Jürgen also helps."

That professionalism includes two or three training sessions a day, seven days a week. A three-week break beckons after the world championships. Whether Cracknell will take it is debatable. "If I have got a bit of spare time, I tend to do a bit extra. As much as we want to beat all the other fours in the world, I want to beat everyone in my four as well."



Cracknell now stands tall among the world's finest rowers

FOOTBALL

Minnows gripped by early dose of Cup fever

NON-LEAGUE REVIEW BY WALTER GAMMIE

RAMSBOTTOM United appear in the FA Cup for the first time tomorrow when they take on Maine Road in the preliminary round.

"It's a very special day for the club, especially for the players," John Maher, the secretary, said. "For them to say they've played in the FA Cup, albeit in September, is a terrific thing for footballers."

It will be no less memorable for Harry Williams, the chairman, who founded Ramsbottom United as a parks side in 1966 and has steered them through the Bury Amateur League, the Bolton Combination and the Manchester League into their present eminence in the North Western Trains League first division.

Putting up floodlights in May last year, a precondition for taking up promotion to the first division just two years after joining the League, was a final step in being accepted into the Cup.

In keeping with their traditions Ramsbottom won promotion with a team that still paid subscriptions to play. Of necessity, things have moved on. Ken Bridge, the manager, now has an experienced assistant in Paul Cuddy, the former Altrincham player, two contracted players and travel expenses for the rest of a young squad.

In Maine Road, Ramsbottom have opponents whom they played in pre-season matches before rising to the same league. Victory would bring the reward of a home tie against Shildon of the Northern League.

Maher said: "We've all seen the World Cup in the summer. Some might call me old-fashioned when I say the FA Cup is still the best competition in the world. You've got the showpiece in May and at the other end you've got the likes of us. It's amazing, isn't it?"

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Interviews will be held over a 2 day period covering Tuesday 22nd September and Wednesday 23rd September 1998.

For further information and an application form please contact M Springett at Chalvedon School, Wickford Avenue, Pitsea, Basildon, Essex SS13 3HL. Tel: 01268 552536.

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RUGBY UNION

Referees warned not to handle unofficial games

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

REFEREES who officiate in the unauthorised matches at Bedford and Swansea tomorrow will find themselves out-cast, leading administrators from the English and Welsh rugby unions said yesterday. However, at least one former international referee, Tony Spreadbury, is prepared to listen to representations from the English clubs who are organising the series of games with the breakaway Welsh clubs, Cardiff and Swansea.

Yates returns for Bath after ear-biting ban

KEVIN YATES will ease himself back into first-class rugby tomorrow after serving his six-month ban for ear-biting (Mark Souster writes). Yates, 25, has been named as a replacement in the Bath squad for the opening match of the season, against Wasps at the Recreation Ground.

es. I'll think about it." Spreadbury said. "The most important area is to make sure you are covered for public liability" (a reference to the Ben Smolten case, in which a young player damaged his neck in a colts match and the referee was found liable by the civil courts).

However, were Spreadbury to referee Bedford's game with Cardiff at Goldington Road, or any forthcoming match that had not received the official blessing of the Rugby Football Union (RFU), he would receive no more matches in his local constituency.

The same is true of any Welsh official involved in Swansea's game with West Hartlepool at St Helen's. "I know the English clubs have approached a number of panel and immediate past-panel referees and, so far as I know, every one has declined," Nick Bunting, the RFU referee development officer, said. "If I was a club owner with expensive assets — the players — I would not want anyone below our top 15 to handle matches."

"I imagine that if any individual did handle unauthorised matches, they would be ostracised by their local society."

Alun Richards, the delegate of the Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) of the Welsh Society of Rugby Union Referees, said that anyone who involved himself with unauthorised Cardiff or Swansea matches would never referee at WRU or Welsh Districts level again. Cardiff will depart for Bedford this morning only after further quibbles that the game was in jeopardy. The Bedford players have held a series of meetings in relation to alleged shortfalls in their most recent salary payments. The meetings were unconnected with the court case in Bristol which left Mike Rayer a free agent after a dispute with Bedford over the payment of the bonus promised if they won last season's second-division title.

TENNIS: WORLD No 1 KEEPS HER COMPOSURE IN DEFEAT OF MAJOLI



Arantxa Sánchez Vicario puts all her effort into a double-handed backhand during her victory over Fabiola Zuluaga.

Hingis shows requisite scorn

HELL hath no fury like a woman scorned, or so it is said, and opponents know no fury like a world champion jilted. Yesterday Martina Hingis took her appointed place in the third round with a 7-6, 6-0 victory over Iva Majoli, recovering from a spirited first-set performance by the former French Open champion and the fact that Julian Alonso, her boy friend, has announced that it is all over between them. Majoli, on the other hand, has never recovered from beating Hingis at Roland Garros last year and, since her first grand-slam success, she has failed to win another title. There were moments yesterday when she looked to be heading for another quick defeat until Hingis began to show signs of weakness, matching Majoli for big ideas and wild shots. After an early break Majoli managed to break

slam main draw. It was to prove an all-too-brief debut as she was dismissed 6-0, 6-2 by Amanda Coetzer. What the Sri Zin Coetzer lacks in height, she more than makes up for in determination. In the merry-go-round of coaching changes that marked the clay-court season she parted company with Gavin Hopper, who joined forces with Monica Seles, while Coetzer worked briefly with Michael de Jongh, who now works with Mary Pierce. Coetzer is now under the watchful eye of Nigel Sears, a former LTA man. Coetzer has few real weapons in her game, save for her ability to turn her opponents' power against themselves. Her legs, although short, are but a blur as she chases down every ball and, when she is on top of her game, her sheer consistency tends to wear down even the most illustrious of opponents. Venus Williams appeared to compromise in her dispute with the Corel WTA Tour over the wearing of a tour patch. After much argument — she refused to wear the offending logo, the WTA fined her if she did not — Williams finally gave in and adulterated the line of her designer outfit with the said patch. Not that she did much to show it off, hiding it on her left shoulder under her long, beaded hair, but wear it she did. Facing Anne Kremer, a qualifier from Luxembourg by way of university in the United States, she showed no signs of being affected by all the hoop-ha. In less than an hour she had moved powerfully into the third round — 6-1, 6-3 — and there was little Kremer could do to stop her.

SPORT IN BRIEF

Smith puts in appeal against ban

SWIMMING: Michelle Smith, the Irish triple Olympic champion, has made an eleventh-hour appeal against the four-year suspension imposed on her by Fina, the international governing body, for swimming that accused her of tampering with a drug test urine sample. (Craig Lord writes). Smith, 28, maintains that she does not know how a dose of alcohol strong enough to have killed her had it passed through her digestive system could have been present in a urine sample that she provided to out-of-competition testers at her Kilkenny home on January 10.

A spokesman for the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne confirmed that an appeal had been received from Smith just over 24 hours before the deadline of today.

SNOOKER: Jimmy White was beaten in the final qualifying round of the China International by a part-time player who must now seek the permission of his employers to travel to the event. White, whose fifth child is due to be born this week, inevitably found his usual focus elusive during a 5-2 defeat by Jon Birch, of Middleburgh, who has taken to supplementing his modest snooker income by selling fitted kitchens.

ROWING: Dr Michael Diserens, who stroked the winning Oxford University crews of 1979 and 1980 against Cambridge and went on to be a member of the Great Britain lightweight rowing squad in 1988 and 1989, bled at the age of 39 after being taken ill while on a family holiday in Scotland.

SHEEHAN ON BRIDGE. Advertisement for a bridge column by Robert Sheehan.

When I began the series on MiniBridge, I was concerned only with playing to make as many tricks as possible. After a few articles I introduced the concept of targets which suggested the number of tricks to aim for depending on the combined point-count of the declaring side (see Lesson 11).

There was no judgment involved in selecting these targets, rather they were thrust willy-nilly upon the hapless declarer. In Bridge the bidding determines the precise number of tricks that declarer has to make which in MiniBridge the declarer must decide for himself, in a limited way, how many tricks he wishes to aim for. Consider the hand below; set up the North-South cards as you wish except hearts are to divide 3-2, spades 4-4 and clubs 2-2.

Play through the hand and decide how many tricks you would make with clubs as trumps, with hearts as trumps and at no-trumps. The score for a successful contract generally depends upon two things, the denomination (the trump suit, or no-trumps) and the level (the number of tricks aimed for). Today I will consider the denomination and next week the level. The declaring side, which, by definition, has more points than the defending side, should always expect to make more than half the tricks. Thus the declaring side only scores for the number of tricks it wins above six.

On the above hand with clubs as trumps you should make ten tricks: five trumps, four hearts and one diamond. Clubs and diamonds are known as the minor suits and each trick above six is worth 20 points. Thus ten tricks in clubs scores 80 points (4 x 20). With hearts as trumps you should make eleven tricks. Did you? Hearts and spades are known as the major suits and they score 30 points for each trick above six. Thus eleven tricks with hearts as trumps scores 150 (5 x 30). In No-Trumps you should make nine tricks but here the scoring is a little complicated. You score 40 points for the first trick over six and 30 points for each subsequent trick. Thus here you would score 100 points (40+30x3). I will leave you to consider a problem. Look at the hand below and decide how many tricks you will make. Remember you do know how many points the other two players have. In this case you should assume that when the points were announced South said he had 14 and North 3.

WORD-WATCHING. A list of words and their definitions.

By Philip Howard. A list of words and their definitions.

KEENE ON CHESS. Advertisement for a chess column by Raymond Keene.

At the tournament at Polonica Zdroj in Poland the Belarusian grandmaster Boris Gelfand achieved one of the great results of his career. In so doing he won a number of brilliant games, including the following masterpiece against Alexei Shirov, who has qualified to challenge Garry Kasparov for his world title.

Diagram of final position. Chess board diagram showing the final position of a game between Boris Gelfand and Alexei Shirov.

White: Boris Gelfand Black: Alexei Shirov Polonica Zdroj 1998 King's Indian Defence. A list of chess moves for the game between Gelfand and Shirov.

By Raymond Keene. A chess puzzle and its solution.

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Chris McGrath meets the trainer enjoying his second career at the top Channon quite content to dream on

It is hard to say which reflects most credit on Mick Channon — that he should have treated the fulfillment of his boyhood dreams only as a platform for those of his maturity, or that it is impossible to resist the air of enchantment that has nourished him throughout. He is justly confident in the gifts that have served him, his nimble feet and then his nimble wits, first as an international footballer and now as a trainer of racehorses. Yet he retains a beguiling sense of wonder.



Channon, who has much to look forward to, gives Natalie Jay a pat after she had finished third at Salisbury yesterday

"Put it this way," he said at Salisbury yesterday, after Cauda Equina had become the 51st winner of his ninth season. "I wouldn't consider that I've ever had to do a day's work in my life. Don't get me wrong, we put in the hours, all right. But I feel very lucky."

Either way, however, he has made his point. Quantity has never been a problem — he had 74 winners four seasons ago — but now he is scoring at the highest level, at Ascot as at Wembley. "Rules are there to be broken, or amended at least," he said. "The mould is being broken. You can no longer say that the only people who can train horses are ex-public schoolboys or trainers' sons."

When he refers to "Joss", he reduces the exotic name to something that sounds, in those robust but mellifluous Wiltshire tones, very like "Joshua" — for all the world as though this limping, smiling courtierman were some long-grained invention of Thomas Hardy. Yet these outlandish arrivals represented the confidence of Sheikh Ahmed al-Maktoum, whose brothers are the pre-eminent force in flat racing. "I nearly fell off my chair," Channon remembered. "I'd had two for him that weren't much good. And you couldn't expect to get any more after that."

Channon, who has much to look forward to, gives Natalie Jay a pat after she had finished third at Salisbury yesterday

Channon, who has much to look forward to, gives Natalie Jay a pat after she had finished third at Salisbury yesterday

The injection of such blue blood, however, may also develop an immunity against a novel source of pain. For it would be surprising if he could keep both his young stars when Godolphin assembles the Maktoums' elite for a writer in the desert. "I can't let it bother me, can I?" he shrugs. "No point worrying. I wouldn't get any sleep. I'm paid to train them this year, and that's exactly what I'm doing." Having said that, there is a wistful tenor to his admission that he wants nothing so much as to win a classic.

Maybe, though, Mick Channon does not come over as the frightened type. But then nor does he make a habit of getting things wrong.

Maybe, though, Mick Channon does not come over as the frightened type. But then nor does he make a habit of getting things wrong.

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Talisman lets his feelings known on eve of critical fixture while Sweden warms to Owen-fever

Focused Shearer lays down law

Matt Dickinson finds the England captain will continue to let his feet do the talking

Someone needed to cut through the dark forest of intrigue and rumour that has enmeshed the England camp in recent weeks, and who better to play the knight than Ian Shearer. Never a man to use six long words when two short ones will do, the England captain wielded his broadsword with invigorating swipes.

"In case anyone has forgotten, there is a game on Saturday, and an important one at that," the England captain said. "All the other stuff about books is irrelevant and of no interest to me. There's been a lot of rubbish written, but without the match none of us would be here." And that, he might have added, includes you, Glenn and Tony.

As eve-of-battle addresses go, it was hardly Henry V. But they were sentiments that needed voicing because, amid the rapid fire of bitching and counter-bitching between Glenn Hoddle and his critics, the players must have begun to wonder whether anyone cared about the game.

Fed up with discovering that certain members of the England camp now communicate via serialisation in *The Sun*, Shearer quickly turned the discussion to football. In particular, he wanted to discuss how his partnership with Michael Owen excites him as much as the rest of the country as England begin their European championship qualifying campaign in Sweden tomorrow.

There have been suggestions that Shearer has been feeling a little neglected amid all the attention lavished on his young sidekick, that he craves the return of the spotlight that now beams into every recess of Owen's life.

If that was ever the case, it had long receded by the time Shearer sat



Shearer says the defeat by Argentina, in the World Cup this summer, has given him sleepless nights. Photograph: Marc Aspland

down this week and spoke like some dozing father about his 18-year-old accomplice. Indeed, the Newcastle United striker was overcome by a misty-eyed glaze as he recalled a poignant exchange between the pair this summer as they contemplated the trauma of penalties against Argentina in the World Cup.

"Michael came up to me when we were about to take the penalties and asked 'what should I do?' Shearer recalled. "I just told him 'do what you normally do and put it in the back of the net'."

"I never had any doubt he would score. It was a great, great penalty to prove that he can handle the pressure and everything that is

thrown at him. Do not talk about his age because he is doing it here and now. It doesn't matter whether he is 18 or 35."

It does to opposing defences who face at least another decade of Owen. Argentina's back line was made to look like police Pandas chasing a speeding Ferrari, and Shearer understands the dilemma that will give the Swedes a restless night.

"Do they drop deep and try to cut his pace off and then leave space for us in midfield?" he said. "Or do they push up to try to catch him outside and leave space for him to run into? Defenders have pace and movement and he has plenty of both. We both scored the last time we played

together against Argentina so the signs are promising."

Ah, Argentina. "There were plenty of times I went over it lying in bed at night," Shearer admitted. "But you can't do that for long. I came back and my two little girls wanted a cuddle. They don't understand if I am low and I don't want them to understand."

"If any of the players need to get any of that out of their system, if they have any lingering thoughts or doubts, this is the time to do it. We must get off to a good start."

Tony Adams, of course, has already got plenty out of his system thanks to the publication of his autobiography which, among other

things, reveals that he believes he should still be England captain. Shearer is no more impressed by the book — "everybody has got stories to tell but I wouldn't criticise team-mates or the manager" — or the mutinous suggestions about the armband.

"Tony would say that, wouldn't he. Naturally you look after your own interests. I won't hold any grudges. But the fact of the matter is that Glenn Hoddle has chosen me."

Still the boss, Shearer is not ready to concede ground to anyone, not even young Owen. Asked who would take the penalties against Sweden tomorrow, Shearer replied: "I am." It was non-negotiable.

Bullish Hoddle puts England on the offensive

FROM MATT DICKINSON IN STOCKHOLM

THERE were pictures of him with his dog, his Jaguar car and on a sun-lounger kissing his girlfriend. For the real obsessives, there were directions to Hawarden, the little village near Chester where he lives.

Across three pages of Sweden's most popular newspaper, they trumpeted every detail about him from his favourite band (The Lightning Seeds) to his golf handicap (eight), and the headline thundered his imminent arrival: "The 18-year-old whom all Sweden fears."

England might have been consumed recently by the internal squabbles surrounding its football team but, in the Liverpool prodigy, the rest of the planet believes that England have a match winner of unparalleled promise.

All eyes will be on him when Sweden line up against Glenn Hoddle's team for tomorrow's European championship qualifier.

The England coach will use that to his advantage as he spends the next 24 hours instilling positive thoughts into his side, and his desire to put the post-World Cup controversies to rest will be reflected by his bullish team selection tomorrow, when Jamie Redknapp, of Liverpool, will be the principal beneficiary.

Barring any of the bad luck to which he has so often succumbed, he will win his ninth cap in the midfield role vacated by David Beckham, who is suspended. Redknapp has not played a

senior international for 16 months but Hoddle believes that his passing will be vital in providing Owen and Alan Shearer with effective service.

That Hoddle thinks England can win this game against a Sweden team weakened by injury is apparent in his decision not to select Robert Lee. The Newcastle United midfielder player would have been the obvious choice if the England coach had opted for a holding player to replace the absent David Batty and Nicky Butt, as he did in the away matches leading up to the World Cup. Instead, it seems certain that he will stick with Paul Scholes, of Manchester United. England will be on the attack.

Other than brief dallying with his midfield options, Hoddle's team has more or less picked itself from the World Cup. Graeme Le Saux looks to have held off the challenge of Andy Hincliffe in the left wing-back position. Steve McManaman, of Liverpool, has not travelled over with the squad because of an Achilles injury.

Tony Adams has been struggling with an ankle injury, but should not be hampered by it for the game, and he will be as keen as any player to put the recent book controversies behind him. For England, a new chapter begins, and Hoddle is planning for it to be a positive one.

ENGLAND probable 3-4-2: O Shearer — G Southgate, A Adams, S Campbell — O Anderson, J Redknapp, P Lee, P Scholes, G Le Saux — A Shearer, M Owen

McCarthy plays waiting game

FROM RUSSELL KEMPSON IN DUBLIN

BILL CLINTON arrived here last night, en route from Moscow, Belfast and Omagh. The United States President visited a factory, pressed flesh and then set off with his entourage for Co. Kerry.

Mick McCarthy, the Ireland manager, also held court yesterday, ahead of the Group 8 European championship qualifying tie against Croatia at Lansdowne Road tomorrow. He did not meet Clinton — "soccer" is not high on the President's list of priorities — but he used a remarkably similar method of fending off questioning that defied too deep.

He would not name his team selection, would not reveal his formation and was loathe to theorise about the possible line-up of Miroslav Blazevic, the Croatia coach. Only when pushed did he concur that, indeed, Blazevic might use a lone forward — Mario Stanic, of Parma — in the absence of Davor Suker, Alen Boksic and Goran Vlavovic, the injured strikers.

It was an impressive, almost Clintonesque display of giving away little in a friendly manner that frustrated yet did not offend. Simultaneously, though, he offered a few crumbs. Two-and-a-half years have passed since McCarthy succeeded Jack Charlton and

the president's expedition, the campaign of trial and error, is over. It is time for Ireland to achieve.

"We now have a very good squad," he said. "It looks like a squad of internationals and that's what the two years have produced."

"We had the trials, the non-competitive matches, and we've used lads who have barely played since. But they've all got experience and caps, and I am delighted how it's gone, individually and collectively."

McCarthy's record is not the best — six wins and eight draws from 24 matches, including a failed World Cup qualifying series — but the transitional period, from Big Jack to Big Mac, was never going to be easy. Charlton's substantial shadow has been an unwelcome, yet constant companion.

Starting tomorrow, against the World Cup semi-finalists, excuses will no longer be tolerated. "I will not settle for a draw, not now," McCarthy said. "If someone were to offer me a draw beforehand, I would not take it."

"We want to beat Croatia. The players feel very good about themselves and they are hungry. We want to bring back that success. We want it badly."

McCoist plays down injury

FROM KEVIN MCCARRA IN VILNIUS

AS A FOOTBALLER ages, injury becomes not so much a problem as a complication, even if there will never be any affection in the relationship. For a while yesterday, there were rumours that Ally McCoist would have to drop out of the Scotland squad that begins its qualifying matches for the European championship by playing Lithuania in Vilnius tomorrow.

The Kilmarnock forward, who will be 36 this month, detected no such drama. He recognised the recurrence of a condition that is merely an aspect of his life.

"It is a calf strain that has bothered me for five years," he said. "I have had to learn to look after it and not train as much as the other lads, but if the game was this evening I would be able to play."

Craig Brown, the Scotland manager, is bound to be sceptical. It was concern over the fitness of McCoist that saw the veteran omitted from the World Cup squad this summer, and misgivings appear to be gathering in the manager's mind once again. "I would think he is a doubt," Brown said. Little indulgence is ever shown towards those of faltering health.

In Brown's plans, the forwards are required to show stamina and harry their opponents. The cult of industry can be tedious, but when Scotland

attempted a more ebullient style at the World Cup, they were beaten 3-0 by Morocco. Painful though the result may have been, the manager can use it as a mandate for his policy of favouring experience and caution. There would be no applause for Brown if he picked a side of youthful panache that lost in Vilnius.

The injuries, and the suspension of Craig Burley, that have pared a layer from the squad, appear only to have left Brown fixing his gaze on the established nucleus of the team. When Scott Gemmill, of Nottingham Forest, was ruled out of the party with a thigh strain yesterday, he was replaced by a well-established figure, Billy Dodds, of Aberdeen.

Even with his resources



McCoist: doubts raised

stretched, Brown has begun to dismiss the possibility of including youngsters against Lithuania. There is little hope, for example, of Callum Davidson, the Blackburn Rovers left-back, making his debut in the

Ekoku asks to be put on the transfer list

EFAN EKOKU, the Wimbledon striker, has asked to be put on the transfer list. It is understood that Ekoku, who arrived three years ago from Norwich City, wanted a move to a bigger club after he failed to negotiate an improved contract.

Ekoku, 30, a member of the Nigeria 1994 World Cup squad, was not picked for France 98 but bounced back by scoring two goals in Wimbledon's Premier League

opener against Tottenham Hotspur.

He said: "I have made my request to Sam Hammam (the Wimbledon owner) and I hope that no one will stand in my way. I have given good service to the club during the period I've spent here but I think it is time to further my career ambitions elsewhere."

As Ekoku's contract runs out next season, Wimbledon will be keen to sell him before he can leave on a free transfer.

Gillespie starting recovery process

FROM GEORGE CAULKIN IN ISTANBUL

JUST over three weeks after a Newcastle United director insisted that his career was finished, Keith Gillespie will tomorrow attempt to rewrite that premature obituary as an integral part of the Northern Ireland team that faces Turkey in the European championship qualifying competition in Istanbul.

If recent events have proved traumatic for many on Tyneside, for Gillespie, 23, they have been a great deal worse. Aside from the innumerable regarding his long-standing ankle injury and the uncertainty provoked by Ruud Gullit's arrival at Newcastle, Gillespie's attempt to reopen contract negotiations with United have thus far stalled. A proposed £3.5 million transfer to Middlesbrough broke down last month.

"The ankle story came from somebody inside Newcastle and that was very upsetting," Gillespie said. "I don't know why they did it. I spoke to Kenny Dalglish about it and he was absolutely livid."

It was the fall-out from Dalglish's subsequent fractious meeting with the Newcastle board that predated his departure a fortnight later. The task of impressing his new club manager will begin at international level in the intimidating surroundings of

the Ali Sami Yen stadium and Northern Ireland's first competitive match under Lawrie McMenemy. Gillespie, due to become a free agent next summer, has held no contract talks with Newcastle for six weeks and "I haven't had much feedback".

Despite the rumours to the contrary, however, at least Gillespie is fit, which is more than can be said for several other key members of McMenemy's squad. The captain, Steve Lomas of West Ham United, has pulled out with an ankle problem, as have the Dundee United pair of Iain Jenkins and Darren Patterson. Iain Dowie, the Queens Park Rangers player-coach, leads the side in Lomas's absence.

In the circumstances, McMenemy has little choice but to play Gillespie. "I need all of my experienced players," the manager said. "He wanted to play and came through the training sessions well."

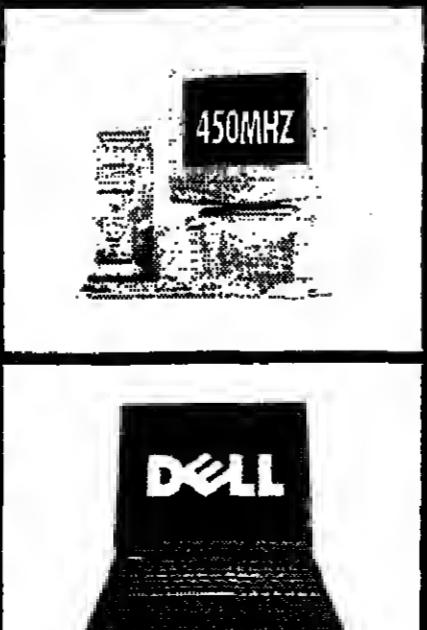
Gillespie is merely happy to be reaching for his boots. "I've got to start somewhere," he said. "I would have liked a few games at club level but that hasn't been possible. It will be hard to come straight back into an international rather than with Newcastle."

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Wasim cuts short the final countdown

By RICHARD HOBSON

OLD TRAFFORD (third day of four): Lancashire (24pts) beat Derbyshire (6) by an innings and eight runs

LANCASHIRE moved to within three points of Surrey, the Britannia Assurance county championship leaders, after completing a first victory against Derbyshire in the competition at Old Trafford since 1985.

Wasim Akram, having told the club committee that he wants to be considered as the overseas player next season, contradicting reports that he wanted to concentrate solely on the World Cup in 1999, returned figures of four for 66 as Derbyshire, 206 behind on first innings, were dismissed for 198. Earlier, Graham Lloyd had scored the third double-hundred of his career in less than five hours.

The counties now have a free day to prepare for the

held at mid-wicket. Weston remained unflustered and Cork, despite being hit on the helmet by Chapple, began to assist in engineering something of a recovery.

Earlier, Derbyshire announced the reappointment of Cork as captain for next season. He remains a star attraction, a man with the knack of making things happen. In the morning session he ran out Austin with a direct hit at the far bowler's end from fine leg, almost 90 yards distant.

He did not waste long playing himself in with the bat before driving the left-arm spin of Keedy over extra cover and completed his half-century in little more than an hour. But in the same over from Chapple, Weston appeared to lose sight of a full-length ball and fell leg-before, before Cork succumbed likewise to Martin with the total still on 163.

DeFreitas offered a thin edge to Hegg and Wasim accepted a return catch from Clarke in the next over. By now the only reason for Lancashire failing to claim the extra half hour was the possibility that the last two wickets would fall in the three remaining overs of the regular quota.

Wasim duly removed Blackwell's leg stump and Martin sealed victory when he bowled Roberts to finish with four for 45.

The small home crowd had thus been entertained from first to last. An eventful opening over yesterday saw Crawley complete his seventh first-class hundred of the season, only to glance a catch to spinner, only to glance a catch to spinner, only to glance a catch to spinner.

When Keedy became Cassar's third victim Lloyd was unbeaten on 212, from 227 balls with 21 fours and a six. His father may have felt in contrite mood last night after being reprimanded for his comments about Muttiah Muralitharan, but at least one member of the Lloyd family had something to sing about.



Lloyd: double-century

NatWest Trophy final at Lord's tomorrow. When Dominic Cork and Robin Weston were restricted for 19 overs in compiling a fifth-wicket stand of 78, however, the prospect grew of a return today. The significance of that was clear to Lancashire, who were aware of the forecast of heavy rain in Manchester.

For the second time in the game they dismissed Derbyshire without controlling the new ball as well as they might. Wasim dropped Barnett at gully on four and the batsman enjoyed a second life when he edged Wasim between first and second slip. The Pakistan all-rounder took revenge in his next over when Fairbrother held a sharp chance low at third slip and May was soon bowled, shuffling forward ineffectually.

Cassar presented Wasim with a catch at gully and the score became 85 for four soon after tea when Spendlove was



Smith plays forcefully into the off side during his innings of 87 for Leicestershire at Edgbaston yesterday

Smith organises quick march

By PAT GIBSON

EDGBASTON (third day of four): Warwickshire, with all second-innings wickets in hand, require 339 runs to beat Leicestershire

IT IS going to take two monumental performances — one from Warwickshire here, another from Surrey at Headingley — or some untimely interference from the weather to prevent Leicestershire from going to the top of the Britannia Assurance county championship and giving themselves every chance of taking the title for the second time in three years.

While Surrey were struggling against Yorkshire, Leicestershire were asking

Warwickshire to score 405 to win in a minimum of 109 overs on a pitch where the odd ball is beginning to keep low.

Not that Leicestershire were altogether convincing. They failed in their first objective which, with rain forecast for today, was to make Warwickshire follow on and push for victory inside three days, with some wasteful bowling that gave away 43 runs in no-balls and wides.

Then, when Warwickshire set off in pursuit of a target which they have surpassed only once in their history (against Glamorgan in 1983), they bowled badly again to allow Wagh, the former Oxford University captain, to make 37 out of 46 by the close.

Simmons, captaining the

side because of Whitaker's continuing absence and Lewis's reduction to the ranks, had to take much of the blame for what happened when Warwickshire resumed on an autumnal morning still needing 83 to avoid the follow-on with only four wickets left.

He chose to bowl himself rather than turning to Mullaally or Mills and conceded 46 in six overs. Brown was the chief beneficiary, particularly in one over which yielded a six and a four to take him to his fifty, plus a wide and a no-ball which carried Warwickshire past 200.

Simmons did take a wicket, parrying Smith's straight drive with his left hand and catching the rebound, but by then the seventh wicket had

put on 62 in ten overs. Piper was bowled round his legs one run later but Brown went on to 75, his highest score of the season, with two sixes and 11 fours. With Giles helping him to put on another 51 for the ninth wicket Warwickshire reduced the deficit to 113.

Leicestershire's requirement then was quick runs and though Wells and Maddly both fell cheaply to Giddins, Sutcliffe got them moving with a brisk 36 and Smith proceeded to play every bit as well as he has done in the first innings. He fell 13 runs short of a century, having scored his runs off only 113 balls, with 11 fours, and given Simmons licence to make up for his earlier failings by clubbing 68 off 62 balls.

Defiant Hick holds up Somerset

By THRASY PETROPOULOS

TAUNTON (third day of four): Worcestershire, with four second-innings wickets in hand, are 171 runs ahead of Somerset

THE England selectors will be relieved that this match has come after the announcement of the Ashes squad. Had it not, the performances of Graeme Hick and Andrew Caddick could only have served to cloud the issue.

After Caddick's eight-wicket haul on the first day, it was almost inevitable that Hick should score a century yesterday and raise a bat, if not quite a fist, at the selectors. As with Caddick, it was a bolt fired once the target had been removed from sight. The point, though, will have been noted.

It was a back-to-the-wall innings, too, for Worcestershire were 15 for two, still 43 runs away from making Somerset bat again, shortly after he came to the crease.

A scooped drive to his first ball from Caddick disappeared between gully and slip, after which he barely played a false stroke. All the trademark drives and pulls were there and his treatment of Steffan Jones, in particular, was savage. Successive sixes off Graham Rose disappeared over midwicket as he passed fifty.

Briefly, memories of ten years ago, when Hick scored his unbeaten 405 on this ground, resurfaced. How different the world must have seemed to him then. It should be noted, too, that his runs were scored to part against Caddick, who had taken those two early wickets to complete tea for the match and had had much his own way with other batsmen.

It was Caddick who was bowling when Hick pushed to mid-off and took the single that brought him his seventh

century of the season, and the 103rd of his career, off only 118 balls, with 14 fours and two sixes.

All the while, however, Somerset were chipping away at the Worcestershire batting. Solanki and Leatherdale, who shared in partnerships of 98 and 51 with Hick, fell to Rose and Keith Parsons respectively, and Rhodes completed a five-ball pair when becoming Caddick's third victim of the day.

When Hick eventually top-edged a pull off Rose and was caught by Burns, running back from midwicket, Worcestershire had lost three wickets for 11 runs and Somerset were back in the ascendancy.

Despite losing Turner in the day's opening over, Somerset's last three wickets had been allowed to put on 146, with half-centuries for Burns and Rose, a first-innings lead of 59 which could prove decisive.

Martin-Jenkins revels in new role

By RUPERT COX

HOVE (final day of four): Sussex (22pts) beat Glamorgan (8) by 18 runs

WITH Jason Lewry unable to bowl for Sussex because of a damaged shoulder tendon, Robin Martin-Jenkins was given the new ball yesterday and so revelled in the role that he produced a career-best analysis of seven for 54 in 16 overs to end Glamorgan's hopes of a first championship victory at Hove since 1975.

Although requiring only 146 to win with almost all day to make the runs, the county champions were bowled out for 127 inside 35 overs. Their downfall was caused by a mixture of poor batting, some fine slip catching and a high-class spell of seam bowling from Martin-Jenkins, establishing Sussex to conjure up a sixth championship victory of the season from a highly unpromising overnight position. A place in next summer's Super Cup would seem almost assured.

Martin-Jenkins, who is in negotiation over a three-year contract, broke the back of the Glamorgan innings with a sustained 11-over, pre-lunch spell from the Sea End. His bowling, allied to two promising innings, including a career-best 78 in the first innings, indicates that Sussex possess an all-rounder with a bright future.

Having dismissed Alan Evans who drove recklessly to point, Martin-Jenkins then missed Wayne Law off successive balls from James Kirley but quickly atoned by trapping Law in front of his fine slip catching and a high-class spell of seam bowling from Martin-Jenkins, establishing Sussex to conjure up a sixth championship victory of the season from a highly unpromising overnight position. A place in next summer's Super Cup would seem almost assured.

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Martin-Jenkins thrustful

Victory leaves Pakistan on a high

CHELMSFORD (final day of four): Pakistan Under-19 beat England Under-19 by five wickets

IN AN atmosphere heavy with an end-of-term feeling, Pakistan Under-19 finished their seven-week tour on a high note, although England win this NatWest series of four-day internationals 2-1.

There was a slightly sour denouement as Tofeeg Umer, the left-handed opener who carried the Pakistan innings with an excellent 95 not out, was denied a century by England that involved Robert Key, the only player to have scored a hundred in this series, bowling his very occasional medium-pace in such a way that he

conceded a no-ball with a second bounce and then a wide. Tofeeg lost the strike with a single and his partner, Faisal Iqbal, hit the winning run off the fourth ball of Key's over. Tofeeg's annoyance was patent and not commensurate with the happy outcome for his side.

In his innings of 179 balls, he suffered only twice from rushes of blood, charging Shah and Hayward, both medium-pacers. On both occasions his top-edged carves landed safely.

The start was delayed for 75 minutes by rain although Pakistan's scoring rate was such that there was never any danger of this game being drawn. Needing a further 196 to win the match and 227 in total, Pakistan were scoring at almost six

Table with multiple columns: Match Name, Score, Innings, and Player Statistics. Includes sections for Lancashire vs Derbyshire, Somerset vs Worcestershire, Warwickshire vs Leicestershire, Yorkshire vs Surrey, Glamorgan vs Sussex, and England vs Pakistan Under-19.

EQUESTRIANISM: OLYMPIC CHAMPION THREATENS WITHDRAWAL OVER BURGHLEY MARKS

Tait sets himself up as dressage judge and jury

By Jenny MacArthur

IN AN unusually contentious start to the Pedigree Chum Burghley Horse Trials yesterday, Blyth Tait, of New Zealand, the Olympic champion and favourite to win the event, threatened to withdraw his leading horse, Chesterfield, after accusing the grand jury of unfair judging in the dressage.

am very disappointed with Angela Tucker's marks, which were totally unfair for the standard of the test. If the horse is not in the top 15 after the dressage, I will consider withdrawing him.

The course that Mark Phillips has designed for the cross country tomorrow is one of the biggest yet seen at Burghley — in a year when the field is weaker than usual because of the proximity of the world championships. Unlike Chesterfield, who was fifth at Badminton in 1996 and fourth last year, the top three horses overnight all provoke doubts about their four-star ability.



Nicola Tweddle rides high on Mr Bumble yesterday

is the showjumping on Sunday. At Badminton in May, the ten-year-old gelding was clear on the cross country but had 25 faults in the showjumping.

and placed eleventh overnight on Oscar, was among those taken aback by the size of the course. "It's huge — I'm glad I'm on a big jumping horse," he said.



Faldo, who has returned to Europe in search of Ryder Cup points, follows the flight of his drive at the 14th during an opening round of 71

Clarke makes hay on controversial greens

FROM MEL WEBB IN CRANS-SUR-SIERRE

SO FAR as the majority of competitors playing in the first round of the Canon European Masters yesterday were concerned, the bad news was that Severiano Ballesteros had redesigned nine of the greens here. The even worse news was that by this time next year, he will have jiggered around with the other nine, too.

into that category, was neither inclined to complain nor, indeed, prepared to be drawn on the minutiae of the alterations. Somebody asked what he thought of the changes. "Yes," he said, deadpan, and added, with irony at full throttle: "Yes, there are quite a few changes." Unspoken, but there, waiting with crystal clarity to be read between the lines, was a determination not to be caught carping.

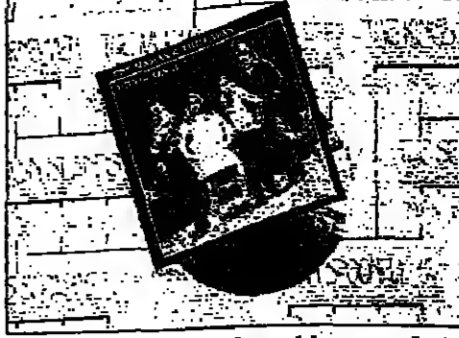
peacefully with Ballesteros's greens, although it must be said that only three of his birdies came on the new ones. The one at the 15th had an element of slapstick about it. "A thing of beauty," Clarke called it as he relived a perfect tee-shot and an attempt to hit a high four-iron that turned into a fat four-iron that skittered 100 yards left into a bunker.

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TELEVISION CHOICE

Lifestyle in the valleys

Home in the Country ITV, 2.15pm The latest entrant into the crowded field of lifestyle programmes is this series presented by Alison Cork from her cottage in South Wales. Her emphasis is on ideas for the home and garden that can be executed at reasonable cost by those not gifted to the DIY department.



A look back to the golden age of American pop music (BBC1, 11.15pm)

Country Tracks BBC2, 3.00pm There is progress at last this week on what promises to be the most compelling feature of this series, the attempt by six volunteers to survive for a week in the wild.

give the characters the chance to dress up in Victorian costumes. But the pleasures of the show have always gone well beyond the solving of puzzles. This is an episode with a definite end-of-term feel. For one thing Hetty and her husband (Derek Benfield) are celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary.

Country Tracks BBC2, 3.00pm There is progress at last this week on what promises to be the most compelling feature of this series, the attempt by six volunteers to survive for a week in the wild.

Rock Family Trees: California Dreamin' BBC2, 11.15pm A new series of excursions into recent rock history, sticking to a format so successful there was no possible reason to change it. The essential ingredients are narration by John Peel, illustration through Pete Frame's hand-drawn genealogical trees and the reminiscences of the now middle-aged rockers.

RADIO CHOICE

The Friday Play - Saigon: Year of the Cat Radio 4, 9.00pm BBC radio drama has been of a very high standard this year and the Friday Play slot is often the place to have that demonstrated.

Babblerick Hall Radio 4, 11.30am Without benefit of a preview-tape I cannot offer an unqualified welcome for a new series of Babblerick Hall, but the signs from the first series are good.

RADIO 1

6.30am Morn Greening and Zoe 8.00 Simon Mayo 12.00 Jo Whitey. Includes 12.30pm Newsbeat 3.00 Dave Pearce. Includes 5.45 Newsbeat 6.00 Peter Tong's Essential Selection 9.00 News 11.00 The World 11.15 Top Show 2.00am Fabio and Grooverider 4.00 Emma B

WORLD SERVICE

7.00am News 7.15 Insight 7.30 Along the Great North Road 7.45 Come Inside 8.00 News 8.15 Off the Shelf: Anna Karina 8.30 Music Review 9.00 News (648 only) News in German 8.15 Focus for Thought 9.15 Wesley 9.30 John Peel 10.00 News 10.05 World Business Report 10.15 The Learning World 10.30 Speaking of English 10.45 Sports Roundup 11.00 Newsdesk 11.30 A Green History of the Planet 12.00 Newsdesk 12.30pm Focus on Faith 1.00 News (648 only) News in German 1.05 World Business Report 1.15 Britain Today 1.30 Bringing Up Baby 2.00 Newshour 3.00 News 3.05 Outlook 3.30 Multitask: Alternative 4.00 News 4.05 Football Extra 4.15 Sports from the Atlantic 4.30 Soccer in Action (648 only) News in German 5.00 Europe Today 5.30 World Business Report 5.45 Britain Today 6.00 News 6.15 Insight 6.30 How To Listen (648 only) News in German 6.45 Sports Roundup 7.00 Newsdesk 7.30 Focus on Faith 8.00 News 8.01 Outlook 8.25 Focus for Thought 8.30 Multitask: Alternative 9.00 Newsdesk 10.00 News. 10.05 World Business Report 10.15 Britain Today 10.30 Crime and Punishment 11.00 Newsdesk 11.30 Insight 11.45 Sports Roundup 12.00 News 12.05am Outlook 12.30 Multitask: Alternative 1.00 Newsdesk 1.30am From the Weeklies 1.45 Britain Today 2.00 Newsdesk 2.30 Soccer from the Atlantic 2.45 Short Story 3.00 Newsday 3.30 Crime and Punishment 4.00 News 4.05 World Business Report 4.15 Sports Roundup 4.30 Weekend

RADIO 2

6.00am Alex Leslie 7.30 Sarah Kennedy 9.30 Ken Bruce 12.00 Jimmy Young 2.00pm Ed Sheeran, 5.05 John Durrin 7.00 Friday Night in a Week 8.25 The Great British Music Concert celebrating the annual switch-on by Chris De Burgh 9.30 Listen to the Band 10.00 Easy Does It 10.30 Shredan Motley 12.00am Charles Nove 4.00 Jackie Bird

CLASSIC FM

6.00am Nick Bailey 9.00 Henry Kelly. Includes the Hall of Fame Hour: favourite pieces voted for in the Classic FM Top 300 12.00 Lunchtime Requests. Jane Jones introduces listeners' favourite music 2.00pm Concerto. Copland (Clanran Concerto) 3.00 Michael Mappin. Includes Continuous Classics, plus sport updates and travel news 6.30 Newsday 7.40 Tchaikovsky Stephen Johnson reassesses Tchaikovsky's last and greatest symphonies 8.00 Tchaikovsky Symphony No 5 in G minor, Pathétique 9.10 Postscript: Rock Play (65) (1) 9.35 German Dances. Music by Mozart and Richard Strauss, played by the Scottish National Orchestra under Neeme Järvi 10.00 BBC Proms 98. Live from the Albert Hall, a late-night form of choral music from Britain, Hungary and Poland. Choristers of Guildford Cathedral, BBC Singers under Jane Glover. Britain (Voices for Today); Kodaly (Egertons); Mahler (The Song of Songs); Elgar (There is Sweet Music, The Fountain); Szymanowski (Kurpe Songs); Pärt, Ludov, Les Maîtres Chanteurs de Strasbourg; Liszt (Missa Solenne) 11.30 Swinging with Uncle Joe. Russell Jackson presents a four-part history of jazz under Communism (1) 12.00 Composer of the Week: Sibelius (1) 1.00am Through the Night, with Susan Sharpe

TALK RADIO

7.00am Bill Overton and Kirsty Young 8.00 Scott Chisholm 11.00 Radio 4 1.00pm Anna Babson 10.00 Tommy Boyd 5.00 Peter Desley 7.00 Nick Abbot 10.00 Mike Allen 2.00am Mike Dickinson and the Creatures Of The Night

RADIO 3

4.45 Muzak Machine, with Tommy Pearson (1) 5.00 In Tune, with Susan Rafferty 7.00 BBC Proms 98. The Virtuoso players of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Daniel Barenboim. Strauss (Fili Entrée); Berg (Three Pieces for Orchestra); Tchaikovsky (Symphony No 5 in G minor, Pathétique) 9.10 Postscript: Rock Play (65) (1) 9.35 German Dances. Music by Mozart and Richard Strauss, played by the Scottish National Orchestra under Neeme Järvi 10.00 BBC Proms 98. Live from the Albert Hall, a late-night form of choral music from Britain, Hungary and Poland. Choristers of Guildford Cathedral, BBC Singers under Jane Glover. Britain (Voices for Today); Kodaly (Egertons); Mahler (The Song of Songs); Elgar (There is Sweet Music, The Fountain); Szymanowski (Kurpe Songs); Pärt, Ludov, Les Maîtres Chanteurs de Strasbourg; Liszt (Missa Solenne) 11.30 Swinging with Uncle Joe. Russell Jackson presents a four-part history of jazz under Communism (1) 12.00 Composer of the Week: Sibelius (1) 1.00am Through the Night, with Susan Sharpe

RADIO 4

6.00am On Air. Presented by Patric Telescopy. Includes a review of David Pountney's new Scottish Opera production of Smetana's Dalibor at the Edinburgh Festival. Plus: Baz Lu (Au Fond du Temple Saül, from The Pearl Fishers); Bach (Overture, BWV106) 9.00 Masterworks, with Penny Gore. Includes Gounod (Ballet music from Faust); Fauré (Nocturnes Nos 8, 10 and 11); Gounod (Symphonie No 2 in G major, Armée Trévière); Fauré (Nocturnes Nos 12 and 13); Smetana (Tabor, Blaník, Ma Vlast) 10.30 Artist of the Week: Barbara Bonney 11.00 Sacred Stories: The Legend of St. George von Hofmannsthal, with Donald Macleod 12.00 Composers of the Week: Elster and Walli 1.00pm The Radio 4 Lunchtime Concert. A Summer Recital from Manchester. Raphael Ensemble. Britten (Phantasy Quintet in F minor); Vaughan Williams (Phantasy Quintet); Dvořák (String Sextet in A Major, Op 48) 2.00 BBC Proms 98. Tuesday's concert (1) 3.35 Beethoven Variations. Masha Maslov, cello, Martha Argerich, piano 4.00 Voices and Viola. Includes 17th-century German song from the counterpoint Akademie Scholl. Talks sung by the Clerkes of Oventford

RADIO 5

4.45 Muzak Machine, with Tommy Pearson (1) 5.00 In Tune, with Susan Rafferty 7.00 BBC Proms 98. The Virtuoso players of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Daniel Barenboim. Strauss (Fili Entrée); Berg (Three Pieces for Orchestra); Tchaikovsky (Symphony No 5 in G minor, Pathétique) 9.10 Postscript: Rock Play (65) (1) 9.35 German Dances. Music by Mozart and Richard Strauss, played by the Scottish National Orchestra under Neeme Järvi 10.00 BBC Proms 98. Live from the Albert Hall, a late-night form of choral music from Britain, Hungary and Poland. Choristers of Guildford Cathedral, BBC Singers under Jane Glover. Britain (Voices for Today); Kodaly (Egertons); Mahler (The Song of Songs); Elgar (There is Sweet Music, The Fountain); Szymanowski (Kurpe Songs); Pärt, Ludov, Les Maîtres Chanteurs de Strasbourg; Liszt (Missa Solenne) 11.30 Swinging with Uncle Joe. Russell Jackson presents a four-part history of jazz under Communism (1) 12.00 Composer of the Week: Sibelius (1) 1.00am Through the Night, with Susan Sharpe

RADIO 6

6.00am Today. Presented by Sue MacGregor. Includes 6.35 The Weather 7.25, 8.25 Sports News 7.45 Thought for the Day 9.00 Desert Island Discs. Sue Lawley's castaway is the television scriptwriter Lucy Gannon (1) 9.45 (LW) All Points North. Simon Armitage reads extracts from his new book, a series of wry, affectionate and witty reports on life in his home village of Marsden, Yorkshire (5/8) 10.00 News: Woman's Hour, with Jenni Murray 11.00 News: Chips 'n' Chapatis. Shyma Patra sets out to explore why curry has become one of Britain's favourite foods 11.30 Babblerick Hall. A new four-part series of Scott Cherny's 18th-century comedy. With Nicholas Le Prevost, Forbes Masson, Dave Hill and Maggie Cheung. See Choice 12.00 (FM) News: You and Yours. Presented by John Walle 12.57pm Weather 12.00 (LW) News Headlines: Shipping Forecast 1.00 The World at One, with Nick Clarke 1.30 The White Stag. Last in the series of the literary quiz. With James Watson, Nigel Williams, Kate Saunders, John Walsh, Sebastian Faulks and reader Rachel Atkins 2.00 News: The Archers (1) 2.15 Afternoon Play: Legals Affairs. Chris Thompson's series about three solicitors in a country practice. With Julia St John, James Wainoi and Maura Syal (2/5) (1) 3.00 News: Check Up. The weekly health phone-in. This week, Barbara Mays and a panel of experts answer listeners' queries on pain 3.30 The Lyric Ballads. To celebrate the 200th anniversary of the publication of The Lyrical Ballads, Professor Jonathan Wordsworth, Pamela Wool and Robert Wood examine the effect of the book of poetry by Coleridge and Wordsworth

Leading scores, page 46

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 46 PERSANO (a) One of the unchronicled cases found in Watson's travel-worn tin dispatch box. LUCAS (a) Eduardo Lucas was an agent who resided at 16 Godolphin Street, in Westminster, to The Second Stain. UNDERWOOD (a) Underwood, John, and Sons, a hatter found on 129 Camberwell Road, London, in A Study in Scarlet. CORAM (a) Professor Coram is an invalid who resided at Yoxley Old Place in Kent in The Golden Pince-Nez. SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE Solution: 1... b3! keeps Black well in the game as if 2 Ra2 bxa2 and the pawn promotes

سكزا من الأهل

Large advertisement for Soap on the Right side of the page, including the text 'THE TIMES FRIDAY' and 'Soap'.

Soaping up a shop, softening up science

It is not so long since the BBC promised us it was going to cut down on docu-soaps, but it seems the genre is simply too 'moreish' to resist, and the latest, *The Shop* (BBC), filmed at Selfridges in London, was one of two new "infotainment" series launched last night.

Department stores, like cruise liners or main-line station cross-antennae, are microcosms of humanity, perfect places for production teams to pan for gleaming nuggets of amusement in the mud of mundane mediocrity. And a limited range of human life was there. We had the ruthless young executive narrowing his eyes while describing the fate of employees with inferior performance motivation. We had the portly female security staff with their "Birds of a Feather" bonhomie. We had male models in their new, horizontal-opening designer underpants, for ease of access and extra support.

The store's Personal Shopper, who assists the richest customers, is called Gabriella di Nora. She is "helping" last night's star, 11-year-old Aaron, from the South of France, by feeding his designer label habit. This was tragically advanced for his age and probably already untreatable, especially in the field of male cosmetics. The poor lad touchingly spent at least two minutes buying his mother a gold watch with a few hundred of the thousands she had given him to blow on "aggressive" in-line skating accessories and the like. Then we saw some more of those fit guys in their undies.

The general manager, David Wilkinson, and his sidekick "visual merchandiser" Mark Bell, wandered around like Julian and Sandy from *Round the Horne*, tutting with outrage at dust-balls, and poorly colour-coordinated displays of backpacks, before snapping them with their Polaroid

for future reanimations. "My God! What is going on here!" squawked Mark, entering a less than tidy merchandising zone, and Daniel Mercer knew the grim P45 loomed. Then it was back to those male models for more pants shots.

The programme fitted about like a hyperactive moth, fitfully cutting from one event to another in case we began to realise that some of it, like the clearance sale of shoes, was less than riveting. Whenever things looked like flagging, it was back to the men in pants. The stout security women got badly out of breath failing to catch a pair of shoplifters "doing a runner". They were "two IC3s" apparently, which is probably polite jargon for guys who wear horizontally opening briefs. (Next week we are promised women in their bras, by the way.)

The programme raised crucial questions about modern retailing

presumably, made the uniquely ubiquitous Carol Vorderman (looking very uncomfortable) jog round the Millennium Dome. She was presenting *What Will They Think of Next?* This is ITV's new answer to *Tomorrow's World*, and before I get too smug about the presentation, it is only fair to point out that the individual items may have contained as much information as the more serious BBC rival.

It wasn't just that Vorderman was made to run. She was forced to deliver her patter revolving on the spot, while a camera circled her like a hawk looking for the chance to land a right-hook. Even more disconcertingly, half the shots were taken from an extremely low angle, knee-height roughly, so that you could see right up her nose.

But the real wackiness was reserved for the items themselves. A new body-odour-resistant fabric, pioneered in Grimsby, was tested

on Sheffield steelworkers. You'll never guess what they did at the end. They did a strip, just like in *The Full Monty* (except they only took off their tops). "They both smell bad, but the white tops smell fresher," said one of the wives, a less than ringing endorsement.

Next, for the item on water-saving plumbing devices, reporter Austin Vince (he's really a schoolteacher, you know) pretended to fall into a giant lavatory bowl. They even found an expert from Thames Water called Dr Peter Spillet. Honestly, you could have killed me. I would have been grateful.

Every item was accompanied by some "appropriate" film or television theme. This was *Mission Impossible*, for a sneak preview of the Millennium Dome's giant, walk-in human body model. We can unexcusably reveal that this is a male and female form symbol-

ically fused together. Unfortunately, however, they look like the victims of a violent car accident. What will they think of next?

Inside Story: Fallen Hero (BBC), by contrast, was an unfussy, old-fashioned documentary, which told a very old-fashioned story. Justin Fashanu ganged himself in an East London garage in May, running from disgrace and possible prison in America, after one of the steepest nose-dives in football history.

His 1979 "goal of the season" would have done credit to Pelé, but he was destroyed by a lethal combination of early success, public adulation, his homosexuality and Brian Clough. The star of the programme turned out to be the younger brother, John; shrewd, disciplined, highly articulate and a successful businessman, who now bitterly regrets disowning Justin when he "came out". It was a powerful tale, simply told.



REVIEW
Paul Hoggart
Will the store's £90 million atrium refurbishment revive flagging fortunes? Will the series prove a huge free advert, as Selfridges obviously hopes. Whom will David Wilkinson sack next week? Will the two fat ladies suffer cardiac arrest? Last night they weren't the only women past their first flush, forced into the indignity of running by the demands of their job. Some bright spark, the director Simon Pearce

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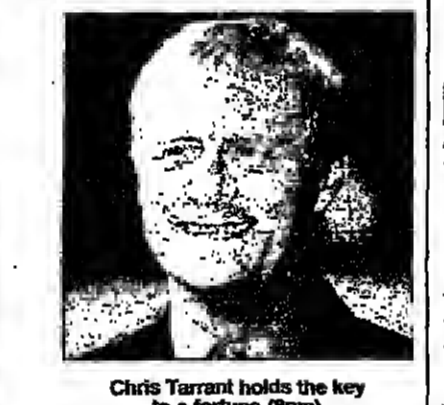
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us doubles

- 6.00am Business Breakfast (42617)
- 7.00 BBC Breakfast News (1) (45907)
- 9.00 Sex Wars (790236)
- 9.40 Breakers (784346)
- 10.05 Top Tip Challenge Ricky Tomlinson and Julie Peasgood play Simon Rouse and Rebecca Wheatley in the money-saving panel game (891107)
- 10.30 Daily Live (1) (458029)
- 10.55 News (1) (105936)
- 11.00 Style Challenge (1089742)
- 11.25 Car's Cook, Won't Cook (1) (1142029)
- 11.55 News (1) (724560)
- 12.00 Through the Keyhole (7081452)
- 12.25pm Wipeout (7173487)
- 12.50 The Weather Show (1) (17558284)
- 1.00 One O'Clock News (1) (49094)
- 1.30 Regional News (1) (97353100)
- 1.40 Neighbours (1) (29219487)
- 2.05 Breakers (1) (29219487)
- 2.25 Outney (1) (7836655)
- 3.15 The Weather Show (1) (2715384)
- 3.25 Playdays (1) (7293029) 3.45 The Busy World of Richard Scary (1) (1084487)
- 4.10 The Littlest Pet Shop (4497839) 4.30 On Your Marks (1) (8882029) 4.35 Cartoon Critters (1) (8570723)
- 5.00 Newsround Disturbing report on child labour in Indonesia (1) (8781075)
- 5.10 Byker Grove (1) (8004075)
- 5.35 Neighbours (1) (170278)
- 6.00 Six O'Clock News (1) (839)
- 6.30 Regional News (891)
- 7.00 Celebrity Ready, Steady, Cook With Phil Vickery and Vinnie Jones and Sharon Davies and Anisley Harriot (1) (5471)
- 7.30 Top of the Pops (1) (934384)
- 7.55 Fawcety Towers Basil's belief that guests are an obstacle to the smooth running of his hotel is amply borne out (1) (801549)
- 8.30 Only Fools and Horses...Del seizes a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to improve his social standing (1) (1) (3140)
- 9.00 Nine O'Clock News (1) (1920)
- 9.30 **Holly Walkthrough** Investigates Robert's brother case involving the disappearance of a Victorian school teacher (1) (89075)
- 10.20 Greylock: The Legend of Tazman; Lord of the Apes (1984); Christopher Lambert stars as the shipwrecked heir raised by primates in the African jungle and brought back to England to claim his inheritance. Directed by Hugh Hudson (1) (1084521) **WALDES** 11.00 **FLM: Greylock: The Legend of Tazman, Lord of the Apes** (1984) 1.15am **FLM: Percy** (1982) 2.50 News headlines and weather (710276) 2.55 BBC News 24
- 12.35am Percy (1971) Starring Hylton Bennett, Britt Ekland and Denholm Elliott. Comedy about a man who undergoes a revolutionary transplant operation. Directed by Ralph Thomas (972765)
- 2.10 Weather (877650)
- 2.15 BBC News 24

- 6.10am The Eurovision Song Contest (8394810) 6.35 Modelling in the Money Markets (5680907)
- 7.00 Spider (491181) 7.05 Teletubbies (1) (792433) 7.30 Mr Benn (1) (2611174) 7.45 Smurfs' Adventures (1) (4051742) 8.10 Cartoon Critters (1) (4270365) 8.35 X-Men (1) (1) (6958825)
- 9.00 Sara (1) (40013) 9.30 Ocean Odyssey (1) (22546) 10.00 The Belts (1) (8510346) 10.25 The Brillys (1) (9524297) 10.40 Teletubbies (1) (4492278) 11.10 Toonatics (776836) 11.45 HawkEye (7483075)
- 12.30pm Working Lunch (56162)
- 1.00 The Beechgrove Garden The Hill Squad installs a water feature for the pupils of Barwickshire High School (4636)
- 1.30 People's Century (1) (1) (5147452)
- 2.25 The Phil Silvers Show (b/w) (1) (25969948)
- 2.50 News (1) (9688162)
- 2.55 Wildlife on Two: Lost Lakes of the Pacific - A Dive into the Unknown (1) (4901928) 3.25 News (1) (9973029) 3.30 Glenn Christian Testes Royal Thailand (1) (1981346) 3.55 Real Rooms (1) (790556)
- 4.20 Ready, Steady, Cook (802029)
- 4.50 Esther Parents of child prodigies discuss the difficulties of nurturing exceptionally gifted youngsters, having to tread a fine line between stifling their talent and pushing them too hard (8004075)
- 5.25 Call My Bluff (1) (8034452) 5.55 The Simpsons (1) (1) (386407) 6.15 The Simpsons (1) (473278)
- 6.40 Star Trek (1) (847655)
- 7.30 Cricket: NatWest Trophy Preview of tomorrow's one-day final at Lord's (617)

- 6.00am GMTV (1337029)
- 9.25 Vanessa (1) (8964758)
- 10.15 This Morning (1) (89484549)
- 12.15pm Regional News (2554162)
- 12.30 ITN Lunchtime News (1) and weather (5096)
- 1.00 WALEs: The Dressing Up Show (33162)
- 1.00 Relative Knowledge (33162)
- 1.30 **Home in the Country** Alison Cork looks at how country style can be replicated in any home (55487)
- 2.00 The Jerry Springer Show (1) (3429094) 2.45 WALEs: What's My Line? (303568) 2.45 Garden Calendar from the National Amateur Garden Show (303568)
- 3.15 News (1) (8581471)
- 3.20 Regional News (5688384)
- 3.25 **CTV: Wizzadora** (5688907) 3.35 Archibald and the Koala (4237100) 3.50 The Forgotten Toys (1) (8784033) 4.10 Blazing Dragons (1) (8784433) 4.15 Get Wet (1) (8237442) 4.50 The Zig and Zag Show (1) (8570723)
- 5.10 A Country Practice (8773617) 5.40 News (1) and weather (536920) 6.00 Catchphrase (1) (1) (472549) 6.25 WALEs: Wales Tonight (868471) 6.25 HTV Weather (505927) 6.30 The West Tonight (87)
- 7.00 Bruce's Price is Right Bruce Foreyth hosts a new series (1) (7330)
- 7.30 Coronation Street (1) (471)



Chris Tarrant holds the key to a fortune (8pm)

- 8.00 Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? Chris Tarrant hosts the game show (8487)
- 8.30 You've Been Framed (1) (5094)
- 9.00 Britain's Craziest Driving Stories (4029)
- 10.00 News at Ten (1) (25704)
- 10.30 HTV News (1) (314073)
- 10.35 WALEs: Manhunt: Search For the Night Stalker (9682360)
- 10.45 The West Show: Screening Somerset (541831)
- 11.15 **Requiem: Murderers' Row** Reno is offered a million dollars to find a missing executive (2/2) (149013)
- 12.10 am Jenny (579292)
- 12.35 Nash Bridges (890230)
- 1.30 Rob & Neil Bed with McDiener (75259)
- 2.00 Club@vision (477583)
- 2.45 Fair of Ages (1900) With Willie Nelson and Kris Kristofferson. A Texas ranger's investigation into a series of grisly murders is heading nowhere, until help comes from an unexpected quarter. Because of overcrowding in the local prison, the ranger takes custody of a convicted serial-killer awaiting trial. Directed by Aaron Lipstadt (568211)
- 4.35 **ITV Newsround** (51043950)
- 5.00 Coronation Street (1) (1) (95037)
- 5.30 News (21388)

- As HTV West except:
- 1.00pm Echo Point (33162)
- 1.30 The Jerry Springer Show (7508758)
- 2.45-3.15 Dogs with Dumbor (303568)
- 5.10-5.40 Shortland Street (9773617)
- 6.00 Heart of the Country (472549)
- 6.25 Central News (480568)
- 6.55-7.00 Lifetime (419365)
- 10.40 Central Weekend Live (7189029)
- 12.10am Tales from the Darkside (8263834)
- 12.40 Nash Bridges (8160292)
- 1.35 Club@vision (2077582)
- 2.20 **ITV at the Bellport Festival** (8897389)
- 3.20 World Football (23952495)
- 3.50 Central Jobfinder '98 (5000263)
- 5.20 Asian Eye (9588360)

- 6.00am Sesame Street (1) (86855)
- 7.00 The Big Breakfast (1) (38917)
- 9.00 **The Big Breakfast** (9185346) 9.05 **News** Choice (3129471) 9.20 **News** by the Ball (1) (70742) 10.00 **Hang Time** (1) (2593471) 10.40 **Sister Sister** (1) (8154075) 11.45 **Madison** (7481471)
- 12.30pm I Dream of Jeannie With Barbara Eden (54758)
- 1.00 Home to Roost With John Thaw and Reece Dinsdale (9684443)
- 1.35 **Collectors' Lot** (41197617)
- 1.50 **Two Thousand Women** (1944) Wartime comedy drama with Phyllis Calvert and Patricia Roc as two women detainees in a German internment camp in France. Frank Launder directs (6126365)
- 3.30 **Watercolour Challenge** (1) (365) 4.00 **Fifteen-to-One: The Big Winners** (100) 4.30 **Countdown** (1) (3664162) 4.55 **Ricki Lake: Mum, I'm Sorry...** (8021100) 5.30 **Pet Rescue** (1) (636)

- 6.00am 5 News and Sport (8833810)
- 7.00 **WideWorld** (1) (1) (182384) 7.30 **Milshack!** (569100) 7.35 **Doppelgang Farm** (1) (193471) 8.00 **Hawkazoo** (9085868) 8.30 **Alvin and the Chipmunks** (1) (9180487)
- 9.00 **Olavango** (5880758) 9.25 **Legend of the Hidden City** (331722) 10.20 **Sunset Beach** (1) (4849655) 11.10 **Lezka** (9354609)
- 12.05 **News at Noon** (1) (9088075) 12.30pm **Family Affairs** (1) (1) (2397549) 1.00 **The Bold and the Beautiful** (1) (1822655) 1.30 **Sons and Daughters** (239520) 2.00 **100 Per Cent Gold** (3275079) 2.30 **Open House** (5688094)
- 3.30 **The Awakening** (1990) Charlton Heston stars in this romp about Egyptian mummies. Directed by Mike Newell (2561237)
- 5.10 **The Graham Whitby Show: Harrison Ford** (9338100)
- 6.00 **100 Per Cent** (4452181)
- 6.30 **Family Affairs** (1) (4443433)
- 7.00 **5 News** (1) (875015)
- 7.30 **Widie SOS** (1) (4449617)

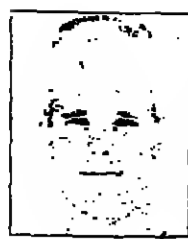


Tristram Payne and Mariella Frostrup present more motoring news (8pm)

- 8.00 **The Car Show** (3370622)
- 8.30 **Sick as a Parrot** (8120920)
- 9.00 **Payback** (1997, TVM) Thriller with Mary Tyler Moore and Edward Asner. After a gutsy woman's evidence leads to a corrupt cop's conviction, a vicious harassment campaign leads to her innocent son being jailed for 30 years. Ken Cameron directs (8607165)
- 10.35 **Stephen King's Golden Years** (1) (8624181)
- 11.35 **Indecent Behaviour** (1993) Thriller with Shannon Tweed, Gary Hudson, Michelle Moffet and Jan-Michael Vincent. A detective probing the death of a sex therapist's patient falls for the murder suspect - the therapist. Directed by Lawrence Lanoff (9750181)
- 1.25am **Clearcut** (1991) Drama with Ron Lee and Graham Greene. A native Canadian activist kidnaps a sawmill company proprietor and a native city lawyer. Richard Linklater directs (2892940)
- 3.15 **So Red the Rose** (1935, b/w) with Margaret Sullivan. The first-ever talkie to broach the subject of the American Civil War. King Vidor directs (2796034)
- 4.40 **Prisoner: Cell Block H** (4529259)
- 5.30 **100 Per Cent** (4422889)

- 6.00am **Paradise in the Planet of the Apes** (1974) (8022781) 7.45 **Desperate Housewives** (1997) (8022781) 8.00 **The World Is the Stage** (1998) (8022781) 11.00 **My Great Dog** (1997) (8022781) 11.30 **Planet of the Apes** (1974) (8022781) 12.00 **Jeopardy!** (1997) (8022781) 12.30 **Wheel of Fortune** (1997) (8022781) 1.00 **The Wheel of Fortune** (1997) (8022781) 1.30 **Wheel of Fortune** (1997) (8022781) 2.00 **Wheel of Fortune** (1997) (8022781) 2.30 **Wheel of Fortune** (1997) (8022781) 3.00 **Wheel of Fortune** (1997) (8022781) 3.30 **Wheel of Fortune** (1997) (8022781) 4.00 **Wheel of Fortune** (1997) (8022781) 4.30 **Wheel of Fortune** (1997) (8022781) 5.00 **Wheel of Fortune** (1997) (8022781) 5.30 **Wheel of Fortune** (1997) (8022781) 6.00 **Wheel of Fortune** (1997) (8022781) 6.30 **Wheel of Fortune** (1997) (8022781) 7.00 **Wheel of Fortune** (1997) (8022781) 7.30 **Wheel of Fortune** (1997) (8022781) 8.00 **Wheel of Fortune** (1997) (8022781) 8.30 **Wheel of 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Sánchez Vicario leads march of seeds into US Open third round



ROWING 45

Cracknell pulls his weight in illustrious company

Super League proposals unveiled

English clubs close ranks over Europe

By ROB HUGHES AND JOHN GOODBODY

ALL those who follow the fortunes of English football must wonder whether debate over the so-called Super League really belongs in Lancaster Gate. Perhaps Threadneedle Street would be a more appropriate location.

Yesterday the 30 clubs that make up the FA Carling Premiership heard counter bids from Media Partners, the proposers of an independent European League, and from Gerd Aigner, the general secretary of Uefa, who are trying to hold onto the clubs and the vast income that the Champions' League has generated.

Peter Leaver, chief executive of the Premier League, finally emerged to say: "There will be no breakaways or splits." The clubs, he claimed, were united and unanimous in opposing a breakaway, but agreed that reform of the European club competitions was necessary.

The chairmen or chief executives of the clubs had heard Peter Ekelund, a director of Media Partners, state that a European League would consist of two competitions, the Super League and a secondary tournament, a knockout event to be known as the ProCup.

"In cold hard cash," Ekelund said, "this means that the six English clubs in the ProCup will share at least \$45 million, and the four clubs in the Super League will get a total of \$70 million." In sterling, that equates to £6.3 million per club per year in the knockout competition, and £14 million for each club in the Super League.

So, while there was apparently no admission of Manchester United and Arsenal for taking part in secret discussions with Media Partners in recent months, it appears that the clubs will now offer a united front... at least until

they hear the full outline of Uefa counter-proposals in December.

The clubs are sitting pretty. They know what is on the table from Media Partners and know that this pressurises Uefa to restructure its own competitions, to their financial benefit.

"The clubs have the best of both worlds," Leaver

THE SUPER LEAGUE AND PROCUP

□ The Super League will have 36 clubs, including four English clubs, in three divisions of 12

□ Each club plays 11 games plus up to seven play-offs

□ 16 of the 36 clubs will be "founder clubs" entitled to play in the competition for three years. England's three founder clubs are Manchester United, Arsenal and Liverpool

□ The remaining 18 will be chosen on the basis of domestic performance

□ The ProCup will be a knockout involving 96 clubs, including six English clubs

□ The six English ProCup clubs will share at least £27 million; the four in the Super League will receive £42m

observed. "They can keep the stable diet of domestic football, and have the icing on the cake of Europe."

More European football, threatening certainly the Worthington Cup, and maybe even the FA Cup, is assured. If Media Partners win the day, their Super League, starting in the 2000-2001 season, will involve 36 clubs playing in three

divisions of 12. It would mean 11 games for everyone, and up to seven more for those who go all the way in the tournament. Eighteen of these 36 clubs would be "founder" clubs, given the right to play in the competition for three years. But, heeding the criticism from within the game, Media Partners have backed off the guarantee that these "founder" clubs would be immune from relegation.

Media Partners argue that, because it took three years of persuasion before J. P. Morgan Bank agreed to underwrite the venture, the bank had the right to expect the leading players, the glamour clubs, would be in the competition for at least three years. The other 18 clubs invited into the competition would be chosen annually on their domestic league performances.

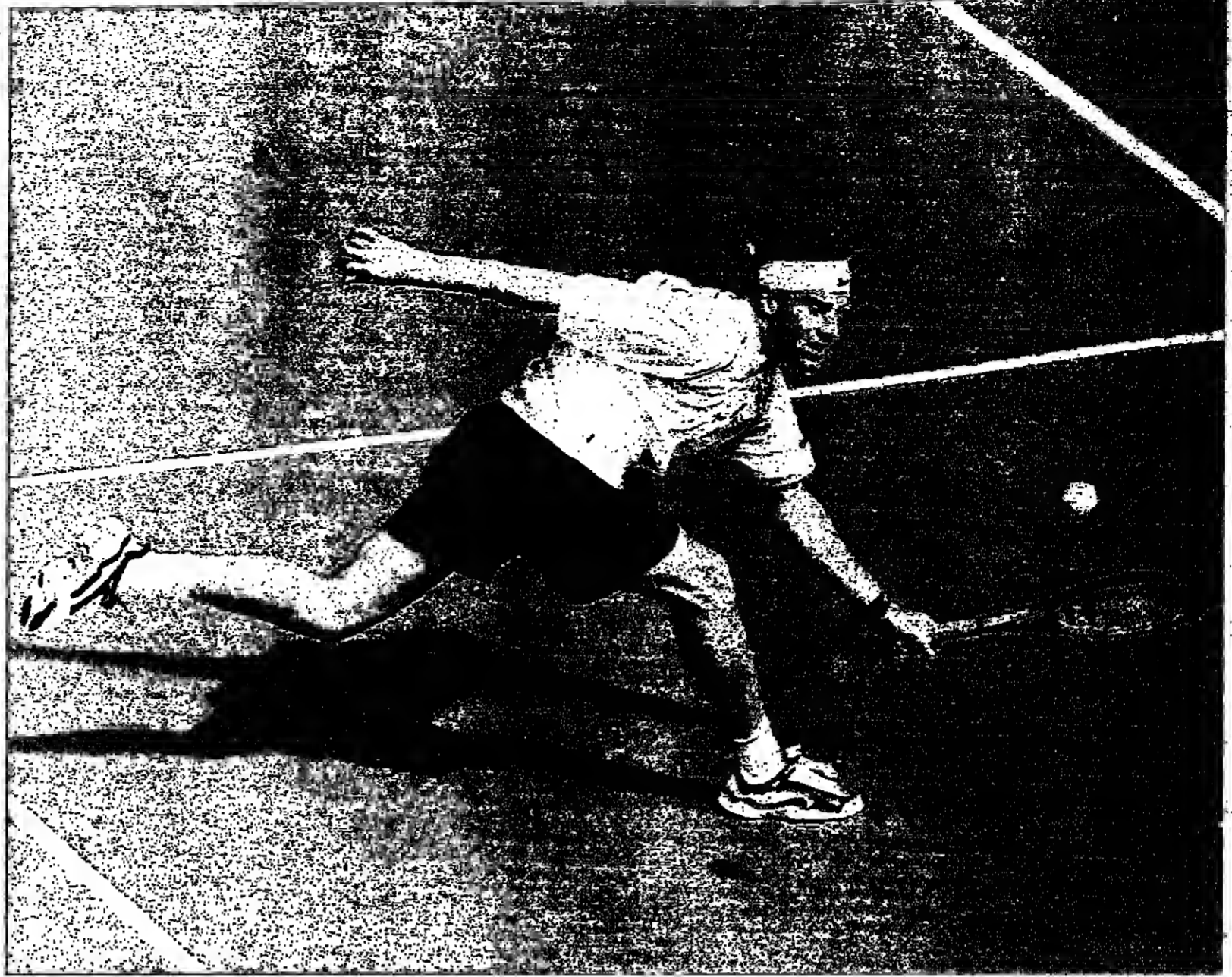
The suggested ProCup is remarkably similar to Uefa's own suggestion that the existing Uefa Cup and Cup Winners' Cup be merged from next season onwards. The ProCup would involve 96 clubs, six of them from England.

So the leading clubs of England remain under the auspices of Uefa, which has Fifa's backing as the sole organiser of European football.

Leaver insists that his post bag has been unanimous against a Super League and he, wearing a second hat as a member of the Uefa Task Force formed in Monte Carlo last week, will now lead England's forces in reshaping the Uefa tournaments.

Uefa yesterday admitted to "very grave doubts" about the Media Partners proposals. They, by contrast, insist that the backing of a leading bank should be sufficient evidence of their viability and their intent.

So, what are you doing on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursday nights in the new millennium? If football is your interest, the men with bags of money, more than we ever anticipated, are out there waiting for your attention. Uefa, a victim of its own success and can only hold on to European club football by paying a price rather higher than they are used to.



Rusedski stretches across court to make a return during his gruelling five-set contest against Ulihrach at Flushing Meadows yesterday

Rusedski rallies to fight another day

FROM JULIAN MUSCAT, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT, IN NEW YORK

GREG RUSEDSKI is dancing with the devil and somehow surviving to tell the tale. After resisting two match points against Wayne Ferreira in the first round on Tuesday, Rusedski repelled one more against Bohdan Ulihrach before slaying his Czech opponent with an act of supreme defiance at the US Open here yesterday.

It seems that nothing can break Rusedski's resilience. As with his attritional confrontation with Ferreira, he rallied from a two-sets-to-one deficit. His apocalyptic service, a stuttering presence for much of the match, exploded into life when he most needed it — not least when he confronted two break points at 3-4 in the decisive set.

Those were match points in all bar definition yet Rusedski poised himself, unleashed his thunderbolts and levelled the match. Two games later, and facing that match point, Rusedski missed his first serve before unloading a second serve so heavy with kick that it unerringly deceived Ulihrach. The Czech could barely get racket to ball and his hopes of victory disappeared. Ulihrach looked like a cold-faced assassin for much of the match but it was Rusedski who had ice in his veins.

It has now taken the Briton six hours of hard labour to reach the third round, a detail bound to compromise his assault on this grand-slam title. Nevertheless, it was impossible not to be struck by the depth of his courage. For the first two sets Ulihrach tormented him with a brilliantly executed gameplan, a combination of lobs, angles and fiercely-driven passes.

But Rusedski, seeded No 6 and a finalist here 12 months ago, remains the supreme competitor. He clung to Ulihrach by his coat-tails, somehow contriving to break through and level the match at one set-all. At that point it seemed he might have taken the Czech's measure but Ulihrach, world ranked No 35, immediately responded to claim the third after Rusedski failed to convert no less than nine break points.

Back Rusedski came to level for the second time, prompting a fifth set high in drama, if not in quality. Ulihrach eventually went down like a giant ocean liner, broken beyond repair by Rusedski's titanic service. The Briton was again below his best but he had somehow penetrated Ulihrach's defensive shield. His 4-6, 6-3, 4-6, 6-2, 7-5 victory projects him towards a match with the winner between Jan Siemerink and Dominik Hrbaty, who were playing last night. It is a prospect neither man will relish.

A dark horse for the men's title is Karol Kucera, seeded No 9 and now in the form which saw him dismiss Pete Sampras en route to the semi-finals of the Australian Open in January. Kucera beat Steve Campbell, a local favourite, in the opening round and produced an encore yesterday against far stiffer opposition. The big-

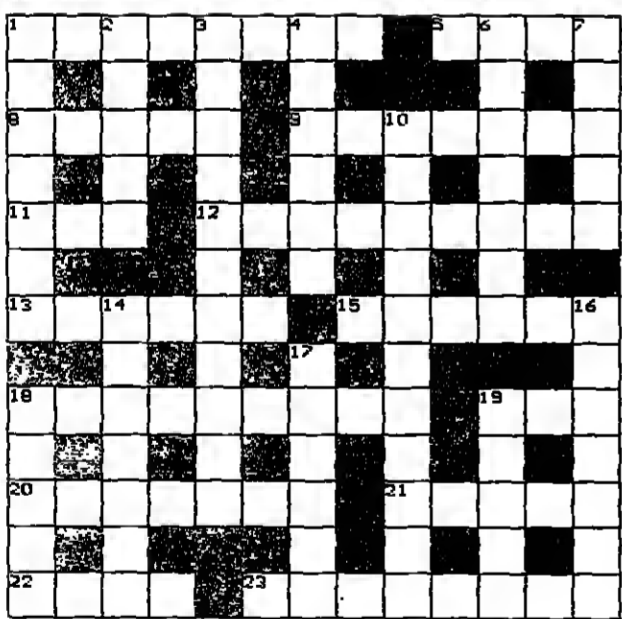
ski come through his third-round match, he will play the winner between Bjorkman and Santoro.

The day opened with the tennis community, international travellers on masse, reflecting on Marc Rosset's good fortune in missing the fatal Swissair flight to Geneva which plunged into the sea off Nova Scotia last night. The Swiss player, a first-round loser on Tuesday, reserved a place on the aircraft but subsequently cancelled his booking to stay here and practice.

A heavy demand for practice courts meant that Rosset was unable to find time to work under the eye of his French coach, Pierre Simolo. That detail alone prompted Rosset, a former top-ten player, to delay his intended departure from Kennedy International Airport for a few days.

Fears that Cedric Pioline, who lost to Jonas Bjorkman in the opening round on Monday, was on board were dispelled when it emerged that the French No 1 had instead flown to Paris.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1502

ACROSS

- 1 Possessive case (8)
- 5 Spoil (chances); satellite aerial (4)
- 8 Horrify (5)
- 9 Guardianship; arrest (7)
- 11 Put down; poem (3)
- 12 State of separateness (9)
- 13 Purpose; plan (6)
- 15 Become more amenable (6)
- 18 First Gk tragedian (9)
- 19 Interval; space (3)
- 20 A dolphin; a loud breather (7)
- 21 — Wains; hymnodist; — Newton (5)
- 22 Armoured vehicle; glass container (4)

DOWN

- 2 Flower lonely as cloud poet saw (8)
- 1 Old and twisted (7)
- 2 Baby's cloth (5)
- 3 Ineffective parliament (7,4)
- 4 Conqueror (6)
- 6 Regard with worship (7)
- 7 Creation composer (5)
- 10 Terrified (6,5)
- 14 Bear; hold up (7)
- 16 Characteristic (7)
- 17 Northernmost US state (6)
- 18 (Thieves') jargon (5)
- 19 Chemical-secreting organ (5)

SOLUTION TO NO 1501

- ACROSS: 6 Green fingers 7 Patent 8 Sparks 9 Leda
- 10 Hoarding 12 Hand over 16 Corn 18 Drawer
- 20 Numbly 21 Milk-and-water
- DOWN: 1 Hereward 2 Snatch 3 Fiesta 4 Agra
- 5 Broken 6 Grace 11 Decimate 13 Afraid 14 Verona
- 15 Renown 17 Ruler 19 Wake

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Lloyd is handed a final warning

By ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT

EMBARRASSMENT was addressed, honour restored and an asset retained yesterday when David Lloyd, the England coach, received a severe reprimand from his employers for questioning the action of Muralitharan, the Sri Lanka off-spinner. Any harsher punishment would have been as inappropriate as the initial remarks.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) stated that an affair which began with some churlish, coded comments and escalated through an acrimonious scene with Geoffrey Boycott into something akin to a witch-hunt, is now closed and that Lloyd will continue with his duties this winter.

This is as it should be, for the notion that Lloyd might be sacked owed far more to media blood-lust than to any sober logic. The offence did not merit such extreme measures, the England players would have been outraged and the national team left rudderless at a time when, organisationally, it is functioning well.

However, as this is Lloyd's second such warning, after an overwrought performance in Zimbabwe two winters ago, he will know that one further

transgression will cost him a job he holds dear and does, in almost every way, better than any previous incumbent.

Lloyd travelled to London for what amounted to an inquiry. The ECB had not made it a disciplinary issue and nor was Lord MacLennan of Knebworth, the chairman, present. Instead, the matter was judged by Tim Lamb, the chief executive, and Simon Pack, the International Teams Director, along with the board's personnel manager, Lesley Portlock. Lamb emerged from the meeting to say that Lloyd had been "severely reprimanded, warned again about his conduct and left in no doubt as to the responsibilities that go with such a high-profile position".

In football-speak, it was not just a ticking-off, more like a yellow card. Lloyd issued an apology in the direction of the Sri Lankans. "I'm sorry for the offence I have caused. I'm glad this whole business is over and I'm looking forward to the winter tours."

It is doubtful whether the Sri Lankans will be mollified. They protested informally to the ECB soon after the BBC

television interview in which Lloyd said of Muralitharan: "If that action is all right, let's find one like it." Yesterday, the Sri Lanka captain, Arjuna Ranatunga, fanned the flames by saying that he did not care if Lloyd lost his job. "No coach should make comments like that," he said.

There is no doubt that Lloyd was wrong to cast public aspersions and utterly misguided in uttering them at a time when Muralitharan — now being pursued by a queue of counties — was winning a Test match with some of the most remarkable figures in cricket history. Like it



Lloyd: reprimanded

or not, sour grapes was the natural interpretation.

The barney with Boycott was not too clever, either, for it showed Lloyd at his most hot-headed. There is a background to both incidents, however, that is not generally known. The Sri Lankans complained that Lloyd should have addressed any comments through the match referee, rather than the media, but in fact he had already done so. I understand that Ahmed Ebrahim, the International Cricket Council referee, has corresponded with Lloyd on the matter after the England coach raised his concerns, in writing, during the Emirates Trophy one-day tournament.

Lloyd has to be taken for what he is, which is a brilliant motivator but certainly not a diplomat. Boycott is no diplomat, either, but his on-air snipe at Lloyd actually brought the pair together after a silent feud that has lasted two years. They exchanged views vehemently, but in private, and then shook hands. If they can now agree to work together, some good may emerge from a regrettable, overblown episode.

Lancashire win, page 49

Tomorrow in The Times

Michael Lynagh kicks off a new rugby column

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